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THE MODERN

JUDEA, AMMON, MOAB, AND EDOM,

COMPARED WITH

ANCIENT PROPHECY.



THE

MODERN JUDEA,

AMMON, MOAB, AND EDOM,

COMPARED WITH

ANCIENT PROPHECY.

WITH NOTES AND ENGRAVINGS ILLUSTRATIVE OF BIBLICAL SUBJECTS.

88480

BY THE

REV. JAMES AITKEN WYLIE,

DOLLAR.

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TO

WILLIAM TENNANT, Esq.,

PROFESSOR OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS.

My dear Sir,

Although I, in common with my countrymen, entertain an admiration of your genius, that alone would not have induced me to address you on the present occasion. Your extensive and accurate knowledge of the countries to which the following pages refer, and the efforts you have made to promote amongst the students of Eastern languages in that ancient seat of learning of which you are one of the most distinguished ornaments, the study of the Geography of the East, as highly subsidiary to a thorough acquaintance with its Literature, merit a public acknowledgment, and form my apology for connecting your name with my labours.

The present volume differs in several important particulars from Dr. Keith's excellent work on the 'Evidence of Prophecy.' Its subject naturally resolves itself into the three following heads. It contains—first, A picture of Palestine and the countries immediately adjoining, which were the subject of ancient prophecy; and by a diligent examination of all the sources of information of any value, I flat-

ter myself that I have been able to present my readers with a more complete view of the present physical state and aspect of these countries than has yet been offered to the public. Not having myself seen these countries, I judged that accuracy required that I should give the purely physical part of the description, in most cases, in the words of the travellers themselves. This has given to the volume a greater air of compilation than really belongs to it.

In the second place, this work contains an elucidation of prophecy, so far as relates to Judea and the neighbouring countries. This, which is the only branch of the subject treated of by Dr. Keith, is now susceptible of a fuller illustration from the works of recent travellers, who have communicated many valuable facts regarding this part of the East. On this part of the subject I was necessarily limited to the consideration of the same prophecies to which Dr. Keith had already adverted; but in endeavouring to show how exactly they have been fulfilled, I have, in almost every case, selected other proofs. Several things, I trust, I have been able to set in a new light. And as regards the prophecy concerning Ammon, it will be admitted, I think, that I have drawn my illustrations from a part of the country better entitled to be regarded as the seat of that ancient nation, than that from which the proofs of Dr. Keith on that head are mainly selected. It has been said, that in the mouth of two witnesses every word shall be established. The office which Dr. Keith and the author have undertaken is not exactly that of a

witness, but of a judge who receives and compares evidence. The public will not be offended that the evidence on this most important point has now been twice collected, compared, and summed up; and with exactly the same result in both cases. *All has come to pass as the Lord hath spoken.*

In the third place, I have endeavoured to speak of the great physical and moral changes which these countries are destined obviously to undergo, from their own capabilities and the predictions of the Divine word. Whatever may be thought of the views I have expressed on this head, and especially of what I have said on the subject of the Turkish empire, it were most desirable that the attention of the Christian public in this country were more generally turned to a question which affects so deeply the progress of civilisation, freedom, and religion in the East.

To you, to whom the subject is familiarly known, it were needless to expatiate on its difficulties. Most readers will bring to the perusal of such a work as the present, preconceived opinions of the physical beauty of regions so renowned, and will feel disappointed, perhaps, that the picture here exhibited of these countries does not correspond with the idea they have already formed of them. Such overlook the fact that these lands are now completely devastated—that the value of the present work must consist in its exhibiting a correct likeness of them as they presently exist, and that the author did not feel himself at liberty, merely for the purpose of enlivening his page, to give to the mountain a more romantic shape, or to

the plain a richer covering, than what they really possess. The true interest of the subject can be felt only by those who view these countries as the august though desolated stage on which great events have been transacted, and sublime predictions fulfilled.

With you I have often speculated on many topics referred to in the following pages; and of hours so agreeably and profitably spent this volume shall always be to me a memorial. But it is my fervent wish—and in this I know you will unite with me, that this treatise may subserve even higher interests—that under the blessing of the Most High it may contribute, in however small a degree, to the more full elucidation of the rich and beautiful imagery, correct metaphors, appropriate allusions, and stupendous prophecies of that volume which is the greatest boon man possesses on earth, and which, above all other things, it concerns him rightly to understand.

I remain,

With much esteem,

Ever faithfully yours,

J. A. Wylie.

Dollar, 10th May, 1841.

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PALESTINE
AND
ADJACENT COUNTRIES
WYLIE'S MODERN JUDEA &c.
1841
HAURAN
JUDEA
Wady Kuheibeh
IDUMEA
of the
GREEKS
EL-TIH
DESERT
or
Desert of wandering
Dead Sea
Mediterranean Sea

THE MODERN JUDEA, AMMON, MOAB, AND EDOM, COMPARED WITH ANCIENT PROPHECY.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

Internal Evidences of the Bible—Evidence from Prophecy—Impossibility of man foreseeing the future—Fulfilled Prophecy an infallible seal of a Divine commission—Characteristics of the Old Testament Prophecies referring to Judea, *etc.*—Their antiquity—Number—Circumstantiality—Harmony of the earlier and later Prophets—Improbability of the event when foretold—Freeness from ambiguity—Authorities—Character of Oriental Travellers—Sandys—Maundrell—Hasselquist—Mariti—Volney—Chateaubriand and Lamartine—Shaw and Clarke—Burckhardt—Buckingham—Irby and Mangles—Laborde—Robinson—Stephens and Lindsay—Elliot—Professor Robinson, *etc. etc.*—Grandeur of the subject—Lessons taught by it—Final end of Providence served by Travellers in the East.

THE Bible possesses certain great characters which a divine hand only could have impressed upon it, and which infallibly proclaim it to be the Word of God. Whether we regard the majesty of its style or the supreme importance and dignity of its subject—the purity of its doctrines or the authority of its commands; whether we consider the harmony of its various parts, or the adaptation of the whole to

the nature and the wants of man—in every point of view, it is exactly such as we would have expected to find a revelation from heaven. Where shall we find more august transactions than those which are recorded in this book? It unfolds the generation of the heavens and of the earth, and details the great events amid which the history of our world opens. Where shall we find history more ancient? It brings down the record of our race from the dawn of time, noticing, as it passes along, the rise of nations, with their settlement in the various regions of the earth. It is most copious in its details, where other histories are most deficient—supplying with true information what they left a blank, or filled up merely with fable. This book was evidently designed for the world; for it is adapted to all ages and to all nations. It is free from every narrow prejudice, and from every antiquated and exploded error. And where is the book of merely human production of which this can be affirmed? Without professing to explain the order of the universe—for it was written with an object infinitely higher—it yet contains nothing at variance with external nature, as modern science has unveiled it. It condemns nothing of which sound reason approves, and allows nothing which reason condemns. And while it confirms and sanctions in the most solemn manner the great principles of natural religion, its main object is to inculcate truths which nature does not reveal, and which the reason of man could never have discovered. Add to all this, the authority with which it addresses the conscience. No book speaks like this book. Even the man who disowns its au-

thority, and treats it as a fable "cunningly devised," feels an involuntary reverence when he looks upon its page; and when its awful voice is heard, he is constrained to listen and to tremble. His conscience recognises it as the "voice of the Eternal."

There is one proof, which we have not ranked amongst the preceding, which yet is of great importance, and which it will be our business in the following pages to explain at length. We allude to the proof arising from the fulfilment of Prophecy.

Those who were called in former ages to the high office of making known the will of Heaven were gifted with an extraordinary power over nature, which they employed in attesting the divinity of their commission. The miracles they wrought were universally received as seals of their truth; for it was presumed that the authority of the Highest would not be delegated to those who were employed in deceiving mankind.

But now the age of miracles is past. We no longer behold the eye of the blind opened, or the tongue of the dumb loosed, or the dead summoned from the tomb; but in the fulfilment of prophecy we have a standing miracle—a miracle which is daily repeated, and is hourly furnishing to the world fresh evidence of the authenticity of the Scriptures.

Now let us consider the peculiar force of this great proof,—how infallibly it proclaims the book in which these prophecies are found to be the word of God. To foretell the future is the attribute of God alone. It is not one of those things which a creature dare not usurp—it is one of those things which he cannot usurp. Man knows not what a

day may bring forth,—to him the events of the next hour are completely veiled. But what sagacity could discover the history of a nation at the distance of a thousand years? That man would forfeit all claim to be considered in possession of a sane mind, who should presume to fix the period of his own life, or foretell the events which would befall him during it. But to predict the future in reference to another individual, over whose motives and actions he had no control, would, if possible, be a still greater impossibility. Still more impossible would it be to foretell the future as regards a number of individuals —as regards a whole nation—as regards several nations—and that too for a long series of ages. No argument is needed to convince us, that this lies not within the scope of finite sagacity. Such a thing as this has never been attempted; and were the attempt to be made, the common sense of mankind would find it hard to determine whether the attempt contained more of impiety or of madness.

The difficulty of foretelling the future arises, in no small degree, from the connection which one event has with another; a connection which renders it necessary, before any single event can be foretold, that the whole system of events, of which it forms a part, be distinctly known. Events are passing at this hour the springs of which might be traced back to the dawn of time: the prescience which disclosed them must have been cognisant of every link in the long chain which connected them with the parent cause. Of every event which history records, or which prophecy revealed, it may be affirmed, that its existence depended on the free agency of myriads of

beings; and had any one of these agents not acted in the requisite way, the event would not have happened, and the history of the world henceforward would have been changed. A moment's reflection on this singularly complex, and vastly extended scheme, is sufficient to convince any one that to predict the future history of the world, would be as great an impossibility as to create the world. The man who could lay down a connected scheme of events, reaching from the present hour to the close of time, as the Bible has done, all of which would in due time be fulfilled, could with equal ease create the globe with its swelling seas, and the heavens with their glorious host.

Another difficulty connected with the revelation of the future, arises from the circumstance, that the greatest affairs, not unfrequently, turn on the most trivial events,—events which no sagacity could have foreseen, and which, granting that they could have been foreseen, from their apparent unimportance would not have been taken into the calculations of any speculator on the future. It would not be difficult to select from history, examples where, had certain individuals not existed, or supposing they had been born an hour later, or died an hour sooner, the fate of empires would have been different. It is well known, that Rome was saved by the cackling of a goose. Had the Roman power been crushed in its infancy how different would have been the future history of the world? The javelin which inflicted the mortal wound on Julian, on the plains of Persia, very probably prevented the suppression of the Christian faith, and the re-establishment of

the ancient idolatry. The spider's web which covered the entrance of the cave in which Mahomet was concealed, saved the life of the impostor, and from that hour to this, has changed the history of the east. And in a later age, the lightning which struck down the companion of Luther by his side, gave a new direction to the mind of the future Reformer, which issued in the emancipation of Europe, from the most grievous thraldom by which the world was ever oppressed. Who could have thought that these minute occurrences would have led to the establishment or the overthrow of the greatest empires, and thus have influenced, more or less, the destiny of every individual of the human race? More ordinary events, than those we have mentioned, it would not be easy to imagine; although they could have been foreseen, it would certainly have been concluded, that their influence could not possibly be felt beyond the hour in which they took place, and yet the events to which they led are amongst the greatest which the history of the world presents.

Now in revealing the future, the effects of the most trivial occurrences must be traced, and their influence calculated on the most important affairs. The spider's web which covered the prophet's retreat, and which the slightest breath might have torn into shreds, must be connected with that terrible empire, which subjugated the east, withstood the shock of armies, and continues to exist, even to our day. Who but God is able to do this? Justly does he claim to himself the sole power of making known the future, "He revealeth the deep and secret things, ... and maketh known what shall be in the latter

days;" and well may he challenge all the idols of the nations to produce such a proof of their power. "Produce your cause, saith the Lord: bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth and show us what shall happen, ... show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods." This is a seal of the divinity which cannot be counterfeited. The lying magician, who has imitated other wonders, finds here the limits of his art; and with the magicians of Egypt, who wrought with their enchantments, but could not imitate the miracles of Moses, he is constrained to confess, "This is the finger of God."

Having shown it to be absolutely impossible, for the sagacity of a mortal, however sharpened by reflection, and trained and corrected by experience, to foresee and predict a series of future events; we shall now advert to certain circumstances which place this impossibility in a clear and striking light, so far as regards the prophecies relative to Judea and the neighbouring countries, with which we shall be chiefly occupied in the following pages.

Let us first take into account the *early period* at which these prophecies were given. Had the fall of the Jewish state been foretold, when the prevalence of vice, the rise of faction, and the encroaching spirit of its powerful neighbours betokened its dissolution, human sagacity might have foreseen the probability of its subjugation; but the long train of evils which have since fallen on the people, and the ages of barbarism which have passed over the country, could not even at that late period have been

predicted. Yet Moses, at the distance of more than fourteen hundred years—before the tribes had crossed the Jordan, and while their settlement in Canaan was a mere probability in the eye of reason—distinctly foretold all the calamities which were to befall them: and at this hour both the people and the country are enduring the evils which their lawgiver disclosed upwards of three thousand years ago. Now unless we admit that these events were revealed to Moses by Him to whom the future and the past are equally known, we must suppose that the Jewish lawgiver foresaw all the causes which were to operate in the world, with all the effects they were to produce for a period of many ages: in other words, that he knew the whole history of the human race from the time he delivered his prophecy up to the hour that the eagles of Rome appeared before Jerusalem.

It is irrational to suppose that Moses foresaw the captivity of his people, and the desolation of their country as an isolated fact: he could know it only in connection with other facts which were to precede it —by tracing out the long train of events which were to lead to this issue. He must have known the rise and fall of the four great monarchies, together with the thousand contingencies by which their fate was to be influenced: the expedient which suggested itself to Cyrus before the walls of Babylon, and which transferred the sovereignty of the Chaldean Empire from its ancient monarchs to the Medo-Persian dynasty—the crossing of the Granicus, and the triumph of Alexander on the plains of Arbela, which closed the period of the second great monarchy and introduced that of the third—the rise of the

Romans, after the three preceding powers had fallen —the early struggles, which often brought them to the brink of ruin, but at last conducted them to an unrivalled pitch of grandeur—the causes which led them to carry their arms into western Asia, and reduce Judea to a Roman province—the insurrectionary character of the Jews, which at length provoked their masters to lay their country utterly waste, and to scatter its inhabitants over the earth. All this Moses must have foreseen before he could predict, as the result of his own sagacity, the final calamities of his people. But further, Moses disclosed the miseries the Jews were to suffer in their state of dispersion; and before he could do this, he must have known the causes which were to operate in the world during the ages which succeeded the fall of Jerusalem—the rise of the false Prophet—the irruption of the Saracens—the fall of the Eastern Empire, and the occupation of Judea for ages, by that tyrannical and slothful race who have long trampled its fertility and beauty into the dust. A sagacity which could discover all this has assuredly no assignable limits, and can be compared only with the prescience of the Most High; it in fact ceases to be a human perfection, and assumes the rank of a divine attribute; and there is no possibility of evading the conclusion, that Moses was inspired by the OMNISCIENT ONE, or was himself OMNISCIENT.

Let us next consider the *number* of these prophecies. An impostor, conscious that his auguries were mere conjectures, would have been careful how he multiplied them, seeing he was thereby encreasing the chances of the discovery of his fraud. But

in the pages of the Jewish prophets prediction is heaped upon prediction, as if they had made a lavish use of the gift conferred upon them. Notwithstanding of this, we never find a prophet inconsistent with himself or with another prophet, it is the same picture which they all exhibit, and that picture can apply only to one country on the face of the earth, and that country is Judea.

Let us also take into account the circumstantiality of the prophecies in regard to event, and time, and place. When a pretender to inspiration speaks of evils to arise in the future, it is rare indeed that he ventures to specify the form they are to assume, the time when they are to happen, or the quarter from which they are to come; he leaves this to the imagination of his hearer, in the hope, that whatever calamity shall fall out in the meantime may be taken as the fulfilment of his prediction. He knows the danger of being circumstantial, and prudently shuns it. But very different is it with the prophets of Israel; the evils which they predict, they exhibit in a form clear and defined, and not as shapeless shadows looming in the distance. They announce by name the countries on which they are to fall, the length of time they are to continue, the age when they are to happen, and the people by whom they are to be inflicted. We do not mean that in their mouth prophecy becomes history; what we affirm is, that the event in all its circumstances is described by certain great characters, sufficiently obscure to cause some doubt regarding it, till it has happened, but at the same time sufficiently distinct to put all doubt regarding it at an end after it has come into

being. If an impostor employs symbol he always employs it as a veil, and not as the prophets, to give force and clearness to his predictions. His words are chosen not for what they convey, but for what they conceal. His tone, which is that of one who constantly fears detection, forms a striking contrast to the freedom and ease which characterise the prophets of Israel—a freedom which the impostor does not possess and cannot imitate.

Another remarkable circumstance connected with these prophecies is, that the earlier prophets speak with the same certainty of the desolation of the land as the later prophets. Though farther removed from the event, they obviously had the same distinct vision of the future with those who stood nearer to it. Moses has given the same minute, faithful, and vivid picture of the wasted land and fallen cities of Judea as Isaiah, although the prophecies of the former were delivered eight hundred years before those of the latter. The conjectures and conclusions of man are less certain in proportion to the distance of the event; but Moses and Isaiah speak with the same certainty, and foretell with the same distinctness the desolation of their country: theirs, therefore, were not the deductions and conclusions of reason. It is clear, and it is the only supposition that can be entertained as an explanation of the fact, that both prophets were alike inspired by that Spirit who knoweth "the end from the beginning," and to whom it is equally easy to foretell the future whether at the distance of *one* or of a *thousand* years.

It must also be remembered, that when these predictions were delivered, their fulfilment was in the

highest degree improbable. What the prophets foretold regarding Judea and the neighbouring states, was not simply that they should be overrun and laid waste, but that they should lie waste for many ages,—that they should cease to be inhabited and become a wilderness. When this was foretold, these countries were flourishing and powerful; they teemed with a vast population, and were covered with opulent cities; and it could never have been deemed possible, that with all their advantages of soil and climate, and with their favourable position as regarded trade—for they were placed almost in the centre of the world—they would be allowed to lie for ages in a state of barbarism. Their power might be in abeyance for a short time; they might be invaded and overrun; but it would have been held certain, that the first care of their conquerors, after establishing themselves in the country, would be to repair the ravages of war, by rebuilding the cities and cultivating the fields; and that under every master these countries would flourish: but the prophets foretold that they should be trodden down and laid waste for ages; and though eighteen hundred years have passed away since their calamities began, they have not, even to this hour, come to an end.

In fine, let us reflect how remote the prophecies are from every thing like ambiguity. Vague and general terms are best fitted to serve the purpose of the impostor: the style of true inspiration is clear, precise, and definite. The auguries of the former are of that ambiguous and doubtful kind which admit of a manifold interpretation: the predictions of

the latter are conveyed in simple and definite terms, and admit only of one construction.

What a contrast do we find between the clear and beautiful simplicity of the Old Testament prophets, and the studied ambiguity of the heathen oracles. We shall give an instance on both sides. When Crœsus, king of Lydia, meant to make war on the Persians, he consulted the oracle at Delphi regarding the success of his undertaking: he received for answer, that by crossing the Halys he would overthrow a mighty power. This answer Crœsus interpreted favourably for himself—understanding the oracle to mean that the power destined to fall was the Persian. He crossed the Halys, encountered Cyrus, and was defeated. Having afterwards sent messengers to reproach the oracle for deceiving him, he was told that the power alluded to by the god as fated to fall was his own.

When Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, was about to pass into Italy to carry on his war against the Romans, he sent to consult the oracle. The king received an answer which might mean either that he should conquer the Romans, or be conquered by them, according as he was pleased to interpret it. Pyrrhus interpreted it in the *former* sense; and it was only after a disastrous war of several years, and when he had returned with disgrace to Epirus, that he was told the god interpreted it in the *latter* sense.[1]

[1] The nice ambiguity of the oracle is best seen in the original:
"Aio te; Æacida, Romanos vincere posse."
Whether Pyrrhus or the Roman power was to fall, according to the oracle, depended on the question whether "vincere posse" governed "Romanos" or "te;" and so nicely is the sentence constructed, that the most skilful grammarian could not with certainty have determined this question.

How beautiful the contrastwhich the distinctness and simplicity of the following prophecies present to the ambiguity of the Oracle. It was foretold both of Babylon and Moab, that in a future age they should be desolate; but not only so—the characteristics of their desolation were described, and the particulars specified, in which the future state and aspect of the one country were to differ from those of the other. Of Babylon it was said—"Neither shall the shepherds make their fold there:" while of Moab the exact reverse was foretold—even that its cities should "be for flocks which shall lie down." When these predictions were given, both countries were equally flourishing; and though the ruin of both had been foreseen, it would have been impossible for man to have determined which of the two should in after ages be smitten with such utter sterility, as not to afford pasturage for the flock of the Arab. But the prophet, with unerring truth, pointed to Babylon as the land on which the heavier doom was to fall. And as it was foretold, so has it happened,—the desolation of Babylon has extended to its soil; and at this day the Arabian does not pitch his tent there, nor does the shepherd there ever make his fold: while the fields of Moab, especially those lying around the site of the ancient Aroer, are covered with a wild herbage, which affords excellent pasturage; and the consequence is, that the ruins of that country are literally occupied in the manner the prophet foretold,—they are for flocks to lie down in. Thus, it is not the simple fact of the future desolation of a country which the Bible discloses,—it describes that desolation, and shows how it shall differ

from the desolation of other countries. It says of the inhabitants of this country—as of Judea for instance—that they shall be scattered over the earth, and yet continue to exist. It says of the inhabitants of that—as of Ammon—that they shall be cut off for ever. Of this land it foretells that it shall be the resort of flocks—of that, that the shepherd shall not make his fold there; of the ruins of this country, that they shall be tenanted by the owl and the cormorant; of the ruins of that, that they shall be for flocks to lie down in. Of this country, in fine, it says, that it shall revive from its overthrow; and of that it affirms, that it shall lie waste for ever. And if we compare the prophecy with the present state of these countries, we shall find that it has been fulfilled not only in its more general features, but in its most minute particulars.

Recent travellers have opened up this most interesting field. Their discoveries have furnished a multitude of facts towards the elucidation of prophecy, of which the Christian world had no conception till a few years ago. Before entering on our subject, we shall briefly sketch the character and comparative merits of the various authorities to which we shall afterwards refer.[1]

Emerging from the age of fabulous narrative regarding Palestine, and entering on that of true history, the first English traveller of note we meet with is GEORGE SANDYS.[2] He was the youngest son of Sir Edwin, archbishop of York. An accomplish-

[1] We think it proper to subjoin the titles of the works, with the editions from which we quote.

[2] 'A Relation of a Journey begun A.D. 1610.' London, 1632. Third Edit.

ed scholar, he elegantly translated Ovid's Metamorphoses into English verse, and composed several spirited poems of his own. His journey to the Holy Land was commenced in 1610. It is difficult to procure his valuable work, in which he records his "doubled travels—once with some toyle and danger performed, and now recorded with sincerity and diligence." It is rather glimpses of the country which he affords us, than a regular account of its general aspect; but the information he conveys is valuable in itself, and is given in an agreeable and interesting manner. His style certainly is not cast in the modern mould; yet it cannot be said to be deficient either in elegance or beauty. It resembles the pictorial delineations with which he has embellished his pages and illustrated his narrative—quaint, yet withal forcible and graphic. He is often more profuse of ideas than words—a rare fault. An occurrence on which a modern traveller would dilate through half a chapter, he dismisses with a single remark; and in consequence his book, in proportion to its size, contains far more regarding the real state and aspect of the country, than is to be found in the voluminous narratives of recent travellers. "The parts I speak of," says he in his dedication, "are the most renowned countries and kingdoms[1]—once the seats of the most glorious and triumphant empires—the theatres of valour and heroicall actions—the soils enriched with all earthly felicities—the places where nature hath produced her wonderful works—where arts and sciences have been invented

[1] Besides Palestine, Sandys travelled over several countries in Asia and Europe.

and perfited—where wisdome, vertue, policie, and civility have been planted, have flourished—and lastly, where God himself did place his own commonwealth..... Which countries, once so glorious, and famous for their happy estate, are now through vice and ingratitude become the most deplored spectacles of extreme miserie—the wild beasts of mankind having broken in upon them, and rooted out all civility; and the pride of a sterne and barbarous tyrant (Achmet, the eighth emperor of the Ottoman family, was the reigning sultan when Sandys travelled) possessing the thrones of ancient and just dominion." We have nowhere found a more minute and intelligible description of Jerusalem, and the places around, than in the work of this traveller. We may add, that his pages are enlivened by sprinklings of that caustic humour of which the writers of two centuries ago were certainly greater masters than the moderns.

The next we mention is HENRY MAUNDRELL.[1] He was chaplain to the English Factory at Aleppo, and visited Jerusalem at Easter, in 1696. His attention was confined chiefly to the "holy places," of which he has given a minute account; but his remarks on the country are very valuable, and their accuracy has been amply confirmed by later travellers. Sandys ascended the coast from the desert to Jaffa, struck through the mountains to Jerusalem, and thence travelled in a straight line to Acre, and passed along the coast to the foot of Lebanon. Maundrell visited chiefly the middle and eastern portions of the Holy Land. Descending on Jeru-

[1] 'A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, A.D. 1696.' Edin. 1812.

salem by the high road through Samaria, he examined the plain of Jericho, and returned through Galilee. Thus, by combining the narratives of the two travellers, we obtain a tolerable idea of the state of Palestine in the seventeenth century. Maundrell's little book possesses a charm which can hardly be said to belong to any book on the same subject. His narrative is easy, eloquent, and faithful.

The next name we mention is that of FREDERICK HASSELQUIST,[1] who was born in 1722, at Tærnvalla, in East Gothland. The history of this traveller partakes of romance. Deprived of his parents in his early youth, he was obliged to support himself at the university of Upsal, by giving instructions to his fellow-students. Here he became a pupil of the celebrated Linnæus; and hearing his master one day enumerate Palestine among the countries of whose natural history we were still ignorant, Hasselquist resolved on supplying the deficiency. He communicated his design to Linnæus, who represented in vain the difficulties which then attended such an undertaking. The ardour of the young scholar overcame every obstacle, and in 1749 he sailed for the Levant. The three following years were spent in Egypt and Palestine—our traveller observing every thing of importance connected with the natural history of these countries, and making extensive collections of their plants and minerals. His tour was finished, and he had already reached Smyrna on his way home, when he found that the ardour with which he had pursued his researches had undermined a constitution naturally weak. Every remedy was employed in vain to preserve so valuable a life. He

[1] 'Voyages and Travels in the Levant.' London, 1766.

"wasted away daily," says Linnæus, "like a lamp whose oil is spent." Soon after his death, his collections and papers arriving from the east, the former were deposited in the Royal Museum of his native country; and the latter, being arranged by his former preceptor, were published by command of the queen of Sweden. His work is valuable, though chiefly as a contribution to our botanical knowledge of the Holy Land. His list of the plants of that country is more complete than has been furnished by any single traveller. It is only occasional remarks with which he favours us on the soil and physical aspect of Palestine; but these are of the highest value.

The next in order is the ABBE MARITI,[1] an Italian. He commenced his travels in 1760. His tour in the Holy Land was very extensive, considering the period at which it was accomplished. Mariti gives us a more extensive view of the physical condition and aspect of Palestine than any of the travellers we have already named. He likewise shows himself more familiarly acquainted with the history and past changes of the country than almost any other traveller. This indeed is a peculiarity of the class to which he belongs. Nor is the good sense of the Abbe the least eminent of his qualities, considering that he was an ecclesiastic of the Church of Rome. It is with an air of ridicule, very unbecoming, no doubt, that he tells us of the Capuchin father who discovered traces of fire on the shores of the Dead sea, and even thought that he could distinguish a strong smell of sulphur. In general,

[1] 'Travels through Cyprus, Syria, and Palestine,' London, 1791.

when he fails to discover any of the wonders which his predecessors among the Jesuits had seen, he does not hesitate to account for it in the following manner, that whereas he possessed only the five senses of nature, they carried with them the five senses of the faith.

VOLNEY [1] is the next traveller we mention. He visited the countries of Egypt and Palestine in 1782; he spent nearly three years in the latter country, during which he collected a vast mass of information regarding the climate, the capabilities of the soil, the character and habits of the people, the genius of the government, and the state of trade, literature, and religion. A Frenchman by birth, and an avowed infidel, Volney travelled with no friendly design towards revelation; yet his work has been of singular service in substantiating, in a great variety of particulars, the fulfilment of prophecy. No one will suspect Volney of making his descriptions purposely to correspond to predictions, which it is possible he never read, and which it is certain he had not in his eye when he wrote; yet, in many instances, he records facts which form a clear fulfilment of prophecy, in almost the very words in which the prophecy was originally given. Of all testimony, that of an enemy is the strongest, and such is the testimony of Volney.

Bating the offensive qualities to which we have alluded, and which do not appear prominently in his travels, Volney is a most delightful narrator. His pencil gives animation even to the sands of the desert: the simplicity of his style rises sometimes into majesty; he is equally happy in describing the Arab

[1] 'Travels in Syria and Egypt.' Perth, 1801.

in his tent, or the tyrannical and brutal djezzar—the numerous scenes of beauty and grandeur which Lebanon unfolds, or the naked rocks and wasted fields of the southern Palestine. A vein of quiet irony and philosophical remark runs through his narrative; and though we must dissent from whatever has an unfriendly aspect towards revelation, yet he carries our sympathies completely with him, in the merciless ridicule which he pours upon the puerile superstitions by which these illustrious regions have been desecrated. Volney is the Hume of travellers.

CHATEAUBRIAND[1] travelled in 1806, and LAMARTINE[2] in 1832. We class them together because they are writers of the same kind. Lamartine has lately been published in this country in a cheap form. His work is rather a poem on the east, than a book of travels. We do not mean that his statements are inaccurate, we allude to the gorgeousness of his descriptions. His style is nearly as oriental as his subject. The same remark applies to Chateaubriand, though not in the same degree. Both in fact have attempted the revival of the old style of travel-writing, which consisted in a rather grotesque combination of natural wonders, Arab fables, and popish legends. It is true, the travellers before us have discarded the two former of these elements, but they have retained the latter to a considerable degree—only in their works, instead of assuming the antique form of the 'legend,' it appears in the more fashionable and beautiful dress of poetry. They are beginning to have followers among the recent

[1] 'Travels to Jerusalem and the Holy Land through Egypt.' London, 1835. 3rd edit.

[2] 'Travels in the East.' London, 1837. 3rd edit.

travellers of their nation. The Baron Geramb contrives to display in his work a great deal more superstition, without having any pretensions to the brilliant qualities which have procured so extensive a popularity for the writings of Chateaubriand and Lamartine.

We name also together Doctors SHAW[1] and CLARKE,[2] though the former preceded the latter by nearly a century. Shaw travelled in 1722, and Clarke in 1801. Both visited other countries, which they have largely described, and consequently the space alloted in their works to Palestine is rather limited; still their accounts of the Holy Land are valuable, containing many useful observations on its natural history; chiefly its botany. Shaw does not detain us with descriptions of particular localities, or details of personal adventure; what he has given is a useful and interesting digest of numerous observations on the climate and the capabilities of the soil. This traveller is the chief authority, and sometimes indeed almost the only authority, with compilers of popular treatises on the natural history of the Bible. Clarke spent scarcely three weeks in Palestine, but he has turned his short stay to the best account; that portion of his work which treats of this country contains many useful facts regarding its vegetable productions; his description of the physical aspect of such parts as lay in his route is not inferior to that of those who preceded him, although his rapid

[1] 'Travels or Observations relating to several parts of Barbary and the Levant.' London, 1757. 2nd edit.

[2] 'Travels in various countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Part II. Greece, Egypt, and the Holy Land.' London, 1817. 4th edit.

journey did not enable him to equal in this respect the great travellers, by whom in a few years he was followed, and whom we now proceed to enumerate.

JOHN LEWIS BURCKHARDT[1] was born in Switzerland, but educated in England. He was engaged by the "Association for promoting the discovery of Africa" to explore the interior of that continent, and neither time nor expence was spared in enabling him to acquire the requisite qualifications for his future researches. He was placed at Aleppo, where it was thought his intercourse with the natives of that city, together with his occasional tours in Syria, would afford him a "view of Arabian life and manners in every degree from the Bedouin camp to the populous city." Starting on his journey, he wore the dress, spoke the language, and imitated the manners of the Arabs of the desert, and thus enjoyed singular opportunities of observing their character, and exploring their country.

Leaving Damascus in the autumn of 1810, in that, and following excursions, which he undertook at short intervals, he examined the Hauran very minutely, together with the ancient territory of Bashan and Gilead, and passing southwards through the countries of Ammon and Moab, entered the interdicted territory of Edom. Here, under the assumed name of Shiekh Ibrahim, and travelling professedly for religious purposes, he penetrated into the mysterious valley of Wady Mousa, and was the first European, in modern times, who beheld the extraordinary monuments which that valley contains. His death at Cairo in 1816 prevented the execution of

[1] 'Travels in Syria, &c.' London, 1822.

his ulterior plans. To this accomplished traveller we owe the best account we possess of the Hauran, and of the peninsula of Mount Sinai; but the discovery in connection with which the name of Burckhardt will live is that of the ruins of Petra, whose scriptural interest is equal to its historical and classical fame, and whose existing state forms so striking a commentary on Jeremiah's prediction of its fall. Burckhardt's description of the countries he visited is distinguished by clearness and simplicity, by extensive learning and masculine sense. The illustration of prophecy appears to have formed no part of his plan; his testimony is only the more valuable on that account, being wholly exempt from the suspicion of partiality.

J. S. BUCKINGHAM[1] is the next authority we mention: a native of our own land, and recently a member of the British legislature. His journeyings were commenced at the early age of nine years, and there are few countries on the face of the earth, which Mr. Buckingham has not visited, either in the character of a professed traveller, or in connection with scientific or mercantile pursuits. In December 1815 he sailed from Alexandria for the coast of Syria; and having visited most of the places worthy of notice in Palestine proper, he crossed the Jordan, and examined very minutely the ancient possessions of the "two tribes and a half." In a subsequent journey, which he undertook and concluded in 1816, he visited the Arab tribes, inhabiting the countries east of the Dead sea.[2] Finding it impossi-

1 'Travels in Palestine, through the countries of Bashan and Gilead, &c.' London, 1822. 2nd edit.

2 'Travels among the Arab Tribes.' London, 1825.

ble to proceed through the eastern desert to Bagdad, as he had intended, he returned northwards, traversing the plains of the Hauran, visiting the city of Damascus, from which place he proceeded across the mountains of Lebanon to Sidon on the sea-coast. His account of this journey is less known, but certainly it is more valuable than that which he has given of his preceding tour in Palestine. Mr. Buckingham's learning is less extensive, his powers of description are more vigorous, than those of Burckhardt; and thus, while the pages of the latter will sometimes be complained of as inanimate, those of the former will generally be found full of life. Like Burckhardt he appears to have had no idea of the important commentary on the Old Testament furnished by his descriptions of the scenes and places he visited.

The Hon. Charles Leonard Irby and James Mangles,[1] commanders in the Royal Navy, left England to commence their tour in Syria, in the same year in which Buckingham concluded his—1816. Access to their work is very difficult to be had, owing to the circumstance, that although printed, it was never published. Their route in Palestine was very extensive; ascending the western plains and descending by the eastern, tracking the breadth of the country repeatedly, and exploring the interior; but the researches of greatest value which these travellers have communicated are those which relate to the countries south and east of the Dead Sea. They are careful observers of whatever falls under their notice, and their observations are record-

1 'Travels in Egypt and Nubia, Syria, and Asia Minor.' London, 1823.

ed in a plain and vigorous style. "Irby and Mangles," says one, well fitted to judge,[1] "furnish a larger number of new facts towards the physical history of the Holy Land, than are to be found in any of the works, old or recent, which have passed under our notice, or in many of them put together; and it is much to be regretted that theirs, which is in many respects the most informing book on the general subject, has never been properly offered to the public, and is difficult to procure, having only been printed for private distribution."

The next name we mention is that of LEON DE LABORDE,[2] the son of a French nobleman. On the 25th of February 1828 he left Cairo, with a numerous company of attendants, and proceeded through the desert to Akaba, on the easterm arm of the Red sea. He thence ascended the great valley of Edom as far as the pass which leads through the mountains of Seir to the ruins of Petra. Having carefully examined these ruins, he returned by the western plain of Edom, and on his way to Egypt, examined the mountains of Sinai. If less patient in research than the great traveller Burckhardt, he is more lively in description; while the learning of the one led him to fill his page with Greek and Arabic inscriptions, the pencil of the other enabled him to present his reader with beautiful likenesses of the scenes he visited. His 'Travels' in Arabia Petræa contain by far the most minute account we possess of the celebrated capital of the ancient Edom. Laborde

1 Author of the 'Pictorial History of Palestine.'
2 'Journey through Arabia Petræa.' London, 1836.

appears to have been conscious that he was treading amid scenes which had been the subject of prophecy; and he sometimes pauses to point out its fulfilment.

We may here mention in reference to the travellers we have last named, that to Zeetzen,[1] Burckhardt, Buckingham, and Irby and Mangles, belong exclusively the merit of having made known to us the countries beyond the Jordan; while we are indebted to Laborde for the full knowledge we possess of the wonders of Wady Mousa. To their accounts future travellers have added nothing of any importance: with one exception, which we shall afterwards state, they have all filled their volumes with personal adventures, which however interesting to the general reader, are of no use for the purpose of elucidating the physical state and character of these regions. Those who wish really to know the actual state of the scriptural countries lying on the Jordan, must study them in the pages of the four travellers last named.

We now enter on a third class of travellers; those who have communicated no doubt several important facts regarding the physical aspect of Palestine, but whose pages owe their chief attraction,

1 M. Zeetzen, a German, in the years 1805 and 1806, traversed great part of the route, in which he was afterwards followed by Burckhardt. Descending on the east of the Jordan as far as Kerek, he passed round the southern extremity of the Dead sea, and taking the road which leads from Hebron to Sinai, he missed Petra, and had no idea of the prolongation of the great valley of the Ghor in El Araba. The only account of these journeys which the public possesses, is contained in the small volume published by the Palestine Association in 1810, translated from the correspondence of M. Zeetzen, with M. de Zach, at Saxe-Gotha.

to the numerous anecdotes and incidents with which they abound, illustrative of the state and character of the natives, and the annoyances to which the traveller in these countries is unavoidably subject.

ROBINSON[1] in 1830 visited the countries on both sides of the Jordan; but without adding much very material to what had been already communicated. This traveller sometimes does on a small scale, what we are doing on a large—travels over districts which he never visited.

Two travellers of considerable name have recently visited these regions, MR. STEPHENS,[2] an American, in 1836; and LORD LINDSAY,[3] a native of Scotland, in 1837. Both passed through Edom, and part of their route through that country is new, namely, from Petra to Hebron. The work of Lord Lindsay discovers considerable acquaintance with the Hebrew tongue; an acquirement which enabled him to discover some ancient sites not previously ascertained. It appears to us that the most valuable part of his book is that which relates to the country on the east of the sea of Tiberias. The work of the British nobleman has been more favourably received, by the public of this country, than that of the American traveller; but we are inclined to prefer the work of the latter. His bold sketches, both of the scenery and the people of the east: the truth and spirit of all his anecdotes and incidents;

[1] 'Travels in Palestine and Syria, by Geo. Robinson, Esq.' London, 1838. (1836?)

[2] 'Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petræa, and the Holy Land.' London, 1838. 2nd edit.

[3] 'Letters on Egypt, Edom, and the Holy Land.' London, 1838. 2nd edit.

and the good humour with which we often see him spreading his mat for the night in some empty khan, cannot fail to render Mr. Stephens a great favourite with all who peruse his work.

We perused the volumes of the Rev. C. B. ELLIOT[1] with great pleasure. He travelled in 1836; and the account he has given of his journey contributes several new facts to our knowledge of Palestine. But his book possesses higher charms than those which arise either from this cause, or from his manly and classic style. There is a freshness about his reflections, and an exalted tone both of sentiment and piety pervading his work, which render it a truly interesting, as well as valuable contribution to this department of literature.

We must here mention the brief but valuable memoir which Dr. ROBINSON[2] has given of his journey through Palestine and the adjacent regions, in 1838. This report was read before the Geographical Society of Berlin, and has since been given to the world in the pages of the American Biblical Repository. Dr. Robinson is professor of biblical literature in the theological seminary, New York, and was better qualified, by previous study, for visiting Palestine, than any other recent traveller. His intimate acquaintance with the Hebrew language has enabled him to determine numerous sites which had previously been incorrectly placed, or were altogether unknown. The expedition was undertaken in

[1] 'Travels in the three great empires of Austria, Russia, and Turkey.' Lond. 1838.

[2] 'Amer. Bib. Rep.' April, 1839. New York.—The Professor was understood to be engaged on a larger account of his travels; but we are not aware that it has yet been given to the public.

company with the Rev. E. Smith, for the illustration of biblical geography, and promises to be of great service towards the accomplishment of that object.

Besides the authorities we have named, there are others to which we shall have frequent occasion to refer, but whose comparative merits our limits do not allow us to specify. Amongst others, we may mention Joliffe's Letters,[1] (1817); Dr. Richardson's Travels,[2] (1818); William Rae Wilson,[3] (1820); MacMichael's Journey,[4] (1818); Monro's Summer Ramble,[5] (1833); Carne's Recollections;[6] Journey from Aleppo to Damascus;[7] Wolff's Journal;[8] Pliny Fisk's Memoir;[9] Paxton's Letters from Palestine, (1836—1838).[10]

Such are the witnesses which we shall bring forward to prove our case. They belong to various nations and to various ranks in life. They travelled at different periods, and they differed in their religious views; yet there is one point in which they are all agreed; and it is this, that the existing state of Palestine and the adjacent countries, is exactly such as the prophets foretold two thousand years ago.

On the importance and grandeur of the subject it

[1] 'Letters from Palestine and Egypt.' Lond. 1822. 3rd edit.
[2] 'Travels along the Mediterranean.' Lond. 1822.
[3] 'Travels in Egypt and the Holy Land.' Lond. 1823. 2nd edit.
[4] 'Journey from Moscow to Constantinople.' Lond. 1819.
[5] 'A Summer Ramble in Syria.' Lond. 1835.
[6] 'Recollections of Travels in the East.' Lond. 1830.
[7] 'A Journey from Aleppo to Damascus; to which is added, an Account of the Maronites inhabiting Mount Lebanus.' (The work of a Jesuit.) Lond. 1736.
[8] 'Journal of the Rev. Joseph Wolff, LL.D.' Lond. 1839.
[9] 'Memoir of the Rev. Pliny Fisk, A.M.' Edin. 1828.
[10] 'Letters from Palestine.' Lond. 1839.

were unnecessary to dilate. It regards a region of the world, interesting alike from the recollections of the past and the hopes of the future—a region peopled in other days by the primeval races of mankind —illustrated by the great events of history, which even to this hour shed an imperishable glory on its withered fields—and adorned with those celebrated cities which have long since gone down to the grave, but whose dead and mouldering ruins are more illustrious than the palaces of living capitals.

Here too the plans of Providence have been developing, silently and slowly, for the past eighteen hundred years; and here we may now view them as finished, so far as regards the woes denounced against that region of the earth; and at this day we may trace the fulfilment of these predictions on the same stage on which they were originally given.

The subject, moreover, is fraught with many salutary lessons. It conducts us over fields covered with the wrecks of mighty empires, and sets before us, in the most affecting light, the instability of worldly grandeur, and the vanity and folly of the objects to gain which nations too frequently waste their energies and consume their existence. Here war accumulated her spoils, while art and science lent their aid to adorn what was vainly deemed the seat of perpetual empire. But what a change has now passed on this stage. The mighty thrones, the powerful hosts, the opulent cities that once occupied it have passed away like the vain pomp of some unsubstantial pageant,—the shout of battle is hushed, and the light of science extinguished,—the broken arch tells where the warrior triumphed, and long

mounds of crumbling ruins proclaim where the city once stood, and where thousands now lie buried. But though all are gone, they have left behind memorable lessons to mankind. They tell us that the kingdoms of this world, constituted and managed as they too frequently are, are of little value, and certainly not worth the blood which has been shed for their acquisition. These are the countries for which the nations of antiquity contended—for which the great battles of former times were fought—and now for ages they have been allowed to remain in the quiet possession of barbarians, and are at this moment a wilderness. Here too we are taught, that nations that would render their power durable, can successfully aspire to greatness only by promoting that righteousness which "exalteth a nation." Conquest may enlarge, art may embellish, and commerce enrich their territories, while their disregard of the will of the Supreme is hastening on their fall. The favour and protection of Him in whose "hand it is to make great," form the only true basis of a nation's prosperity. To promote His honour is the most effectual way of securing their own. This is the first lesson which nations ought to learn, it is generally the last to be attended to.

Here too individuals are taught many profitable lessons. Amid the melancholy wrecks of kingdoms passed away, we are made to feel the truth of that word which "endures for ever," and are strongly reminded of the approach of that hour, when "the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up."

In fine, we must express our conviction, that the

Most High meant to serve an important end by the recent concourse of so many travellers to these countries. The gratification of their own curiosity was the only motive perhaps of which they were conscious. Little did they think that they were obeying an impulse from on high, and that Jehovah meant them to be the witnesses of his truth to the after ages of the world. The condition of these lands, we believe, is about to be changed. Turkish tyranny cannot last for ever; and its grinding weight has only to be lifted off, in order that these regions may burst again into the paradise which they once were, and which nature designed they should be. But though the condition of these countries were changed to-morrow, their PAST STATE is now *stereotyped* in the pages of the travellers, and may in any after age be compared with the predictions of the prophets. Whatever, then, may be the fortunes of these countries in time to come—whatever the eminence to which they may rise in point of physical beauty, or of moral influence, when ruled by a free government, and inhabited by an intellectual and religious people, of which we verily believe they will soon become the seats; yet while the world lasts, there will always be evidence to convince mankind that the woes denounced against them were *all* fulfilled, and that the prophets never uttered a word in reference to them, which Jehovah did not confirm.

CHAPTER II.

THE ANCIENT COMPARED WITH THE MODERN JUDEA.

Extent of Palestine—Boundaries—Interest attached to it—Accounts of Palestine by the Crusaders fictitious—Indebted for true information to more recent visitors—Geographical plan of the country—Distribution of the mountains—Arrangement of the plains and valleys—Scenery varied—Ancient fertility—Proofs of this from Scripture—From Greek and Roman writers—Causes of its great productiveness—Excellence of soil—Variety of climate—Method of cultivation—Present desolate state—Causes of this—Tyranny of the Government—Predatory habits of the Arabs—Destruction of the ancient cisterns—Extinction of the trees.

PALESTINE is a narrow stripe of land, running for about two hundred miles along the shores of the Western Asia. Its exact length, measuring from El Arish (the river of Egypt) on the South, to the Damoor, (the ancient Tamyras) which falls from Lebanon into the sea, at a point nearly due west from the northern extremity of the territory of the tribe of Asher, is one hundred and ninety miles. Its average breadth may be stated at fifty miles. In this estimate of its breadth we leave out of view the large and fertile possessions of Israel on the east of the Jordan—the districts of Argob, Bashan, and Gilead: if these be taken into account the average of its breadth will be much higher, perhaps seventy miles.

On all sides the boundaries of Palestine are dis-

tinctly marked by bold natural barriers. On the north by the mountains of Lebanon, which divide it from the ancient Syria; on the south by the hills of Hebron, beyond which lie the desolate fields of Edom. The Jordan waters its eastern border; while its western shores are washed by the Mediterranean.

Extent of territory is in no case the measure of the interest which attaches to a country: no one would think of comparing, in point of attraction, the plains of Greece with the vast regions under the sway of Russia; but in no case, perhaps, is the disproportion so great between the very limited extent of territory, and the overwhelming interest which attaches to it, as in that of the country at present under our review. The notice Heaven designed to take of this land, and the fertility and beauty with which he clothed her, making her the glory of all lands; the splendour of her past annals, and the important events yet to be transacted in her before the providence of God shall close; the seat in past ages of the most remarkable people on the face of the earth; the sanctuary of the true religion, when the rest of the world was sunk in gross idolatry, and the source whence Christian nations have drawn their earliest historical knowledge, and their religious faith: on all these accounts the ancient land of promise, though now in ruin, possesses an interest which does not, and cannot belong to any other country on the face of the earth. Every mountain and stream and valley of this land is sacred, as associated with some venerable name, or some imperishable deed. Prophets have trod her soil. Mighty kings have filled

her throne. Her valleys have re-echoed the voice of apostles; and her dust now holds the ashes of her illustrious dead. This too was the stage on which the redemption of man was achieved; and while the gospel continues to be preached, the land where "God was manifest in the flesh"—where the miracles of Jesus were performed, and where the great atonement was accomplished,—the land from which the apostles went forth to spread the tidings of salvation through a fallen world, will always be dear to the heart of the Christian.

Till of late years our knowledge of this land was very limited. Palestine was seldom visited, at least by intelligent travellers. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, many a foot from our own land trod the soil of Judea; while the crusades lasted, armies of pilgrims as well as of soldiers were poured upon it from Europe; but no object was gained worthy of the blood which was shed, and the treasure which was expended in these foolish enterprises. The one sought the shores of Syria, to fight for a sepulchre in which it was affirmed that Christ had been laid; and the other, to nourish his piety by the sight of places accounted holy; but the sanguinary valour of the former, and the superstitious ardour of the latter, rendered both incapable of calmly observing the actual state of the country, and of instituting a sound comparison between what they saw on the fields of Judea, and what they read in the pages of the Prophets. On their return home, instead of making any rational use of the knowledge they had acquired, they amused their countrymen with marvellous and idle tales of what they had seen

and done in a far distant land. Others were fired by their glowing though fictitious narratives, and thus the return of one band of pilgrims was commonly the signal for the departure of another, who were fated to suffer as much, and to profit as little as their predecessors had done.

In due time this religious fervour subsided. The progress of knowledge directed the spirit of enterprise into a better channel. Since the period we have referred to, Judea has been visited for worthier objects, and by men whose intelligence amply qualified them for examining the country, and whose character entitles us to place the fullest confidence in their reports. But all who have visited her—and as we have already hinted, among the travellers in the Holy Land are found both the friends and the foes of Revelation—have agreed in representing her existing state as the very picture drawn so long ago by the pen of Moses and of later prophets.

We shall first detail the geographical plan of the country: this will be useful even where a map may be had recourse to, and where this is not the case, provided the reader will keep in view the arrangement we are about to state, he will have little difficulty in referring to its precise place in the general plan, any particular locality of which we may afterwards speak.

Fully to understand the geographical arrangement of the hills and valleys of Palestine, it is necessary to extend our view considerably beyond the limits of the Land of Promise. Directing our view then to the north, two parallel chains of mountains are seen descending from Syria, and approaching the confines of the Holy Land. They enclose between them a

valley of about fifteen miles in breadth—the Cœlo-Syria of the ancients, and the El Bekka of the natives. Arriving near the sources of the Jordan, the western chain inclines towards the sea, and running across the country in a line of towering mountains, forms the northern boundary of Palestine, and terminates on the shores of the Mediterranean, near to the ruins of the illustrious Tyre. These are known in Scripture as the mountains of Lebanon. Let us now attend to the eastern chain. At the point we have already specified—the springs of the Jordan, this chain divides and sends two branches to the south, the one running on the east and the other on the west of the Jordan, thus enclosing between them the valley through which it flows: and as the mountains are prolonged, so the valley itself is prolonged to the eastern arm of the Red sea. The mountainous chain which runs on the east of the Jordan, and which is lofty and rugged, especially when viewed from the low plain of Jericho, forms the hills of Gilead, the mountains of Moab, and passing on to the south, the mountains of Seir in the land of Edom. But it is chiefly with the western of these two subordinate chains that we have to do. This branch traverses the whole of the Holy Land from north to south, and forms the principal hills of Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. The waving line which their summits form may be distinctly traced into Arabia, where, pursuing their course through the desert, they terminate in those stupendous mountains, on whose sides Moses fed the flock of Jethro, and from whose top the law was given to the tribes after their eduction from Egypt.

The physical characteristics of these mountains—

the varied scenes of soft and pastoral beauty, of imposing grandeur, or of awful desolation which they contain, we shall afterwards describe; we attend at present almost exclusively to their geographical distribution. From the higher and parent range of Lebanon, then, comes the lower range of Judea. Running through the middle of the country, at nearly equal distances from the Mediterranean on the right, and the Jordan on the left, they have been termed not inappropriately "the back-bone of Palestine." The principal range is composed of lime-stone; a rock which perhaps is more cavernous in its structure than any other, and in accordance with this, it is well known that the hills of Palestine abound in grottos. Sometimes from the main trunk lateral branches run off, such as the hills of Carmel, which advance into the sea, and form a bold and beautiful promontory as they are approached from the Mediterranean. The external characters of these mountains vary at different parts of their course. The hills of upper and lower Galilee, though of inferior altitude to the mighty Lebanon, are still of considerable height: they are for the most part desolate, but in some instances are covered with wild flowers and luxuriant herbage. In Samaria they sink to a lower level, form soft and beautiful hills, and abound in charming prospects, being clothed with venerable forests of olive, and besprinkled with numerous villages. In Judea they rise again, lose their verdure, and assume a dry and stony appearance. Around Jerusalem their bases enlarge; their appearance becomes more sublime, but at the same time more sterile; their summits ascend to a greater height, and range

themselves in a sort of amphitheatre, as if proud to enclose in their stony arms that illustrious city, which, "like a diadem crowneth the mountains."[1] Farther to the south, they assume a character still more stern and desolate; near to the southern extremity of the Dead sea they form into stupendous and naked piles, abounding with caverns, some of which, it is said, are so large that they might contain fifteen hundred men. This is the wilderness of En-gedi, so celebrated in the early history of David: it was amid these rocks and caves that the son of Jesse, anointed by Samuel and proscribed by Saul, was able to shelter himself and his followers from the keen pursuit of the monarch. The place, says Volney, has been "a refuge for vagabonds in all ages."[2]

Such is the arrangement of the mountains of the Holy Land: let us now attend to the disposition of its principal valleys. On either side of the mountainous chain we have described, the land of Palestine spreads out into extensive plains, running from north to south: their direction being necessarily regulated by that of the mountains. On the east is the plain of Jericho. This valley contains in its bosom the Jordan, with its three lakes, Merom, Tiberias, and Asphaltites. It is a continuation of the delightful vale of Cœlo-Syria, or Baalbec on the north; and is prolonged, on the south, in the Wady Araba of Edom. Sterile, gloomy, and unvisited, save by the Arab who haunts it for plunder, and the pilgrim who comes to wash in the sacred stream

[1] Sandys, p. 154.

[2] The principal authorities consulted for this account of the mountains, are, Volney, vol. i, pp. 201—211; Burckhardt, pp. 19—36, 344—347; Elliot, vol. ii, p. 380.

which rolls through it, every traveller has laboured to depict its horrors; and one traveller has actually called it the "Valley of the Shadow of Death." Such assuredly was not the aspect of this plain in former times, when the "silver tides" of the Jordan were shaded by palm-trees, which grew so abundantly here, as to give to the district the name of the "Valley of Palms." On the west of the central chain are the great plains which run from the foot of Lebanon, south to Gaza, the border of the Philistines. These plains were highly fertile in other days: lying on the coast, they were the seat of opulent towns, and the scene of great commercial activity and splendour. Now they are almost entirely deserted: great part of their surface is covered with sand; some few patches are cultivated; the arable land is covered with spontaneous herbage. These plains vary in breadth at different points in the line of their course, but on the coast they do not meet with a single interruption throughout their whole extent from Lebanon south to the Arabian desert, save what is offered by the verdant and swelling heights of Carmel.

All that is necessary to complete the geographical picture of the Holy Land, is to mention a third great valley or plain, which runs at right angles to the other two—the plain of Esdraelon. It is placed nearly in the middle of Palestine. Rising on the shores of the Mediterranean, and running between the hills of Samaria on the right, and those of Galilee on the left, it stretches across the country in a south-easterly direction: a sinking of the central chain of mountains at Bysan, the ancient Bethshan,

allows it to continue its course to the banks of the Jordan. It is the largest inland plain in Palestine, and its soil is, beyond all question, the most fertile. The stream of the Kishon, and the Arab encampments which are sometimes seen here, tend to relieve the scene of neglect and desolation which this great plain exhibits.

It must be evident from what we have said, that, although of very limited extent, Palestine possessed great variety of natural scenery, far surpassing in this respect many countries whose territorial limits are immeasurably larger. The majestic Lebanon, whose sides nourished the cedar and the oak, and whose summits, covered with snow, shot into the clouds: the fruitful hills of Samaria, where the olive and the vine flourished: the Vale of Sharon, abounding with pictures of the pastoral life: the plain of Esdraelon, displaying on its ample bosom the varied labours of the husbandman: the mountain-glen filled by the cascade: the champaign watered by the river: the wilderness, with its solitudes: the sea-coast, with its promontories and bays and "haven of ships:" its cities, nestling in the vale like Nazareth; or seated on the lofty summit like Bethulia; or perched on the crag like Gamala; or extending along the shores of a noble lake like Capernaum; or proudly encompassed by a girdle of hills like Jerusalem; so varied and so opposite were the attributes which were brought within the narrow limits of Palestine, to form what, even in a physical point of view, is one of the most remarkable countries on the face of the earth.

Such in point of geographical arrangement and physical aspect is the country of which we speak: the theatre in former ages of the greatest events which have

been transacted on the earth; and the stage in latter days on which so many prophecies have been fulfilled, or are still fulfilling. The great features of the country indeed have not been changed by the infliction of its predicted woes, but these have left the most frightful traces on its surface. The illustrations we shall afterwards offer on this head are capable of being made much more distinct and forcible, by comparison with the highly flourishing condition in ancient times, of this now neglected and desolate land. In other days, Palestine was scarcely equalled by any country in amenity of climate, fertility of soil, and in the rich variety of its productions. This is abundantly clear both from the Scripture records, and the more eminent writers of antiquity: we shall briefly adduce the testimony of both.

After a journey of forty years, the tribes pitched their camps on the plains of Moab, and were about to pass over and possess the land, when Moses thus addressed them: "The Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths that spring out of valleys and hills. A land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of oil-olive and honey. A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass."[1] And again, "The land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: but the land whither ye go to

[1] Deuteronomy, viii, 7—9.

possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven. A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year."[1] This is the testimony of Jehovah; for Moses had not examined personally a foot-breadth of that land; nor, as yet, had he even viewed it from the top of Pisgah: he could speak of it only as he was "moved by the Holy Ghost." Thirty-eight years before this, on the first approach of the children of Israel to the borders of the land, on the south, by the great valley of Edom, Moses sent twelve men to search the country. After a survey of the whole land,[2] they returned with an "evil report," as regarded the difficulty of conquering it, but on the point of productiveness, the testimony of the spies was unequivocal and decided: "We came into the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it flows with milk and honey." In a later age, Rab-shakeh knew not how he could better reconcile the Jews to their threatened captivity, than by telling them that the country to which his master would carry them away, was rich and beautiful as their own: "Eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig-tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern; until I come and take you away to a land like your own land; a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive oil and of honey."[3]

[1] Deut. xi, 10—12.

[2] The spies appear to have ascended by the eastern valley—the plain of the Jordan; crossed the country at the foot of Lebanon, and descended along the western plain; a route which would afford them ample opportunities of observing and judging of the capabilities of the country. Num. xiii, 21—25.

[3] 2 Kings, xviii, 31, 32.

The testimony of Scripture on the point in question is fully corroborated by that of the Greek and Roman writers. Josephus, than whom no one had better opportunities of knowing the truth, or could have been more easily convicted of error by his contemporaries, had he written what was not true, speaks of Galilee as a region singularly fertile, planted with all kinds of trees, which were so fruitful as to provoke the most indolent to be at pains in cultivating and dressing them.[1] To Judea he ascribes the praise of eminent fertility.[2] Speaking of Samaria, he commends the variety of its fruits; its soft and fruitful soil, so fit for tillage: its salubrious waters: and its pastures, abounding in flocks, and yielding abundance of milk.[3] The plain of Jericho he calls a "divine region."[4] Eusebius likewise speaks in terms of the highest admiration of the various productions of the Land of Promise: its olives, its corn, and grain of all kinds; its vines, and honey, and palms, "and other fruit-bearing trees innumerable;" its cattle, its flocks, and pastures.[5] Even Tacitus deemed the beauty of this land not unworthy of his page: After condemning the religious manners of the Jews as contemptible and sordid, admitting, at the same time, that they entertained the loftiest conceptions of the Supreme—whom, to use its own beautiful language, they regard as

"Æternum, neque mutabile, neque interiturum,"

—he proceeds to speak of their country: "The in-

[1] Josephi de Bello, lib. iii, c. 2. [2] "Χώρα ἴνδοτον." Antiq. xv, 5.
[3] Ibid., lib. ii, cap. 26. [4] "Θεῖον χώριον." Lib. v, cap. 4.
[5] Relandi Palest. Illust., tom. i, p. 387. (Trajecti Batavorum, 1714.)

habitants are of sound constitution, and capable of enduring toil: the climate is dry, and the soil rich: all the fruit trees known to our own country (Italy) grow there in abundance, besides the balsamum and palm."[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, the well known historian and soldier, speaks of the resplendent cities, and the well cultivated and luxuriant lands of Palestine.[2] In fine, Jerome, who was a native of Judea, affirms that no one acquainted with the countries lying between Egypt on the one hand, and Mount Taurus and the Euphrates on the other, adorned, as many of them were, with powerful cities, and enjoying a delicious climate, could hesitate, to award the palm, in point of fertility, to Judea.[3] Such, on the testimony both of sacred and profane writers, was the ancient condition of Palestine; and the accuracy of their descriptions is attested by the wrecks of her former fertility, which yet remain after eighteen centuries of neglect and oppression.

We shall now briefly point out the causes of this great productiveness. These may be reduced to two heads: first, the great variety of soil and climate which Palestine possessed. And second, the method of cultivation practised by the ancient Hebrews.

The soil of the plains is different from that of the hill-county; the former is light and loamy, the latter stony, but not infertile. This rich loamy soil prevails, not only in the great plains we have named—Jericho, Ramah, and Esdraelon—but likewise in those which stretch from Carmel, northwards along

[1] Taciti Hist., lib. v, cap. 6.
[2] Amm. Mar., lib. xiv. (Relandi Palest. Illust.)
[3] Hierom. Com. in Ezek., cap. xx.

the shore of the Mediterranean, comprising the ancient Phœnicia; and in several of smaller dimensions inland, such as those of Zebulun and Sephoury, and such also is the character of the lands lying around the sea of Galilee. In some of these plains it is hardly possible to find a pebble, the soil resembles garden mould. Under proper cultivation the produce of these plains, which form no inconsiderable part of the whole land, would exceed all calculation. It did so in ancient times, and the productive power of the soil is not in the smallest degree diminished at this hour. The soil of the mountains we have said is different, but this difference only tended to enrich the country by varying its productions. Palestine numbered amongst her native products the plants proper both to low and to mountainous countries. Her hills were clothed with the olive, or planted with vines and fig-trees: while melons, gourds, cucumbers, and grain of all kinds were cultivated on her plains. Her woods were much esteemed both on account of their use and beauty. The shittah, the box, and the myrtle, were planted in the wilderness; the sycamore grew by the wayside to shade the traveller from the heat; the gardens of En-gedi and the vale of Jericho were abundantly stocked with palms and balsams, the oak flourished in Bashan, and the cedar in Lebanon. Many parts of the mountains which otherwise would have been bare and unproductive were clothed with the olive, and so abundant and valuable was its produce, that a single acre occupied as an olive forest, was accounted equal to two acres of arable land. Three times every year did the husbandman come to the

fig-tree, and three times did he gather its fruits.[1] Every season the sower was twice seen upon the fields of Palestine, and twice did the bounteous earth yield her harvests. When the former rains began to fall, which usually happened at that period of the year which corresponds to the end of our October, the husbandman sowed his winter crop of wheat and barley, which he reaped in May. The latter rains fell in April, when the sowing for the summer crop commenced, generally on fields from which the winter crop had already been reaped, and this second harvest was gathered in October.[2] The hopes of the year depended on the former and latter rains, which, therefore, were anxiously expected by the ancient Hebrew, as they still are by the natives. In a country like ours the winter has commenced long before a second crop could be ripened, and a great part of the year is thus lost to the husbandman; but in Palestine, the productive powers of the soil were scarcely ever suspended, and it was only for a very short time, in the depth of winter, that the processes of sowing and reaping were intermitted.

Such was the cultivation of the plains. That portion of the land which fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah was chiefly mountainous, and on that account unfit for grain, but it was well adapted for the cultivation of vines and fig-trees: and it was in this that the riches of that tribe consisted; agreeably to the

[1] The fig-tree produced three crops every year; the spring, summer, and winter figs. If the winter was mild, the latter remained on the tree till spring, when they were gathered as a delicious morsel.—Shaw, p. 342.

[2] The summer crop at present consists of doura, (Indian millet,) cotton, beans, water-melons, &c.

blessing which their father Jacob pronounced upon them: "Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes." Vestiges of the ancient vineyards of Judah are still to be seen around Hebron, and amongst the mountains south-west of Jerusalem—a district which at this day contains the finest vines in all Palestine. The excellent pasturages included in the portion of this tribe, especially towards its southern limits, are also alluded to by the patriarch, "His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk." Whilst of the tribes of Issachar and Asher, who were to inherit the rich lands of Esdraelon, and the fine plains running from Carmel northwards along the coast, and some of the fertile vales situated in the adjoining mountains, he said, "He saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant," "Out of Asher his bread shall be fat."[1] Even "the pastures of the wilderness," when refreshed by rains, were exceedingly luxuriant; they were covered moreover with numerous sweet-smelling flowers, which tended at once to enrich and beautify them, and to render them grateful to the numerous flocks of which they formed the range. Thus every part of the land of promise had its proper use. The variety of its soil so multiplied its productions, that it furnished within itself whatever was necessary for the comfort and subsistence of its inhabitants: in this respect it was never excelled, if ever equalled, by any land on earth—"the glory of all lands." Its lakes and rivers contained abundance of fish, its valleys

[1] Genesis, xlix, 11, 12, 15, 20.

were covered with corn, its pastures flowed with milk, its hills melted with wine. To these we may add honey as another of its productions; both that which exuded from the trees, and that which the bees deposited in the clefts of rocks. The former, on the testimony of Diodorus Siculus and Pliny,[1] was both abundant and of excellent quality; not inferior to that which bees elaborated. And with regard to the latter, so abundant was it in some parts of the country, that it appears to have formed an important article of food, as in the case of the Baptist, who "did eat locusts and wild honey." Even the dreary region around the Dead sea ministered in abundance this article of luxury to the inhabitants. Bees made their hives amid its black rocks, and a region unfit for producing any thing else, yielded honey in plenty. Thus the words of Moses in his song were fulfilled, "And he made him to suck honey out of the rock," and, by giving to the olive the power of flourishing on the naked mountain, "oil out of the flinty rock." And how fully the following words of Moses were fulfilled has already been shown: "And thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape."

[1] The μελί ἄγριον of Diodorus Siculus. Lib. xix, cap. 104. He tells us that the Nabatheans drank it mixed with water. Pliny, also, lib. xv, 7, speaks of the honey of the olive, which he thus highly commends. "Sponte nascitur (oleum) in Syriæ maritimis quod Elæomeli vocant: manat ex arboribus *pingue*, crassius melle, resina tenuius, sapore dulci;" and hence perhaps the smell of honey which sailors have perceived when off the coast of Palestine, of which Maundrell speaks. The same fact illustrates an occurrence in the history of Saul. "And all they of the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground. And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped."—1 Sam. xiv, 25, 26.

Palestine was also distinguished for the variety of its climate, and this, not less than the excellence of its soil, contributed to swell the list of its productions.

The climate of a country depends on causes which are not greatly affected by the changes of its surface. Its proximity to the earth's equator; its distance from, or position on the shores of the ocean; and the arrangement of its plains and mountains: in these respects, it is obvious, Palestine has undergone no change; we may therefore conclude that the climate of the ancient and modern Judea is very much the same. The changes which the face of the country has undergone are considerable, and in consequence, the heat of summer may be a little greater on the plains, from the great want of irrigation; and the cold of winter a little more severe amongst the mountains, owing to the absence of cultivation and shelter; but with these exceptions, the climate of Judea is no doubt the same at this day as in the time of the Hebrews. We shall therefore speak of it as it presently exists.

The great plains on the coast necessarily enjoy a much higher temperature than the highly elevated and mountainous tract in the middle of the country. Lying under a sky which during summer is rarely obscured by a cloud—warmed by the humid west and south-west winds, which the Arabs call the "fathers of the rains"[1]—and defended by the range of Lebanon and the central ridge of Judea, from the cold blasts of the north and north-east, which are sometimes severely felt on the high plains of the

[1] Volney, vol. i, p. 228.

Hauran, and even in the valley of Damascus—these plains have a very high temperature. During the summer months the heat is almost insupportable, and the climate may be called a tropical one. In the plain of Jericho the temperature is also very high. This valley, which is low, long, and comparatively narrow, is enclosed throughout its whole extent on the west and east by high mountains, and open only to the south and north. Here, therefore, the air is sultry and even stifling. The greater heat of the climate in this plain is manifest by the earlier maturity of all its productions. Barley harvest begins here a fortnight sooner than in any other part of Palestine. Winter in the plain of Jericho is like a mild spring; and Mariti mentions a fact, as existing at this day, which is also noticed by Josephus, that the inhabitants of the plain are clothed in linen, when snow is seen on many parts of the interior of Judea. Whilst this high temperature prevails on the plains, the air of the mountains is comparatively cool. The currents of wind to which the elevations and depressions of the surface give rise, the springs, and the shelter afforded to the soil by trees, have a tendency to moderate the heat. These causes must have acted more powerfully in ancient times, when the irrigation of the hills was more attended to, and the forests more numerous; but their influence is still felt; and the consequence is, that in summer, when the great plains are burnt up with the drought, and assume the appearance of a desert, the verdure of the mountains, where the least care is bestowed on their cultivation, is seldom known to fade.

Thus Palestine unites, under the same sky, the climates of the tropical and temperate zones; and, as the consequence of this, the fruits proper to both regions grow here in abundance. Not to speak of the palm, the olive, the fig-tree, and the vine which flourished abundantly in the soil of the ancient Judea, and are found at this day growing wild on some parts of the mountains, the cotton plant is cultivated everywhere—especially on the plains around the ancient Sarepta. Great part of Lebanon is planted by the Druses with the mulberry tree, from which a beautiful silk is obtained. Near the ancient Beth-shan, adjoining the Jordan, the indigo plant grows wild; and the sugar-cane is cultivated around Beyrout and Sidon, with equal success as on the banks of the Nile. The gardens of Jaffa (Joppa) produce lemons, enormous citrons, and water melons. The produce of these celebrated gardens in the latter article is not equalled any where in the world except at Damietta. The hills around Gaza are covered with palms, which yield dates of a quality not inferior to the palms of Mecca, the native country of this beautiful and useful tree. The pomegranate was esteemed by the ancient Hebrews a most delicious fruit; and those which grow at this day in the gardens of Gaza are not inferior to the pomegranates of Algiers. The oranges of Tripoli are not excelled by those of Malta, nor the figs of Beyrout by those of Marseilles. And were care taken, there can be no doubt that the coffee plant might be cultivated on the mountains of Judea, seeing it grows abundantly on the hills of Yemen, which are similar in soil and climate, and are in fact a continuation of the great Syrian chain.

Thus the flowers and fruits of the different zones flourish in the climate of Judea; and if such be the case in the present neglected state of the country, we may easily imagine the rich profusion which covered its fields in former days.

The same variety of climate which mingled the fruits of Europe with those of the torrid zone on the fields of Palestine, must have tended to render it in other days a most delightful residence. While the plains were already gay with the flowers of spring, the mountains were still hoary with the snows of winter; and if the heat of the former was found to be oppressive, the ascent of a few hours conveyed the inhabitants into the cool and temperate air of the latter. On the hills around Jerusalem snow falls every year in February. If it is of any depth, the inhabitants view it as a promise of plenty, and hold public rejoicings, as the Egyptians do when the banks of the Nile are cut; at this season the cold is often intense; and such it appears to have been in ancient times:—"He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?" But the ancient as well as the modern inhabitants enjoyed an easy retreat from the cold of the mountains. A descent into the plain placed them in the temperature of May. Many of the natives of Lebanon at this day pass the winter near Tripoli on the coast, while their houses, situated at a considerable height on the mountain, are buried under the snow. With all these advantages of soil and climate, it is not surprising, as Volney remarks, that the Greeks and Romans should have esteemed

this country "among the most beautiful of the provinces."

Another cause which led to the great productiveness of Palestine was the method of cultivation adopted by the ancient Hebrews. Whatever may be the soil and climate of a country, a due method of treatment is necessary fully to develope its resources. When Palestine was inhabited by its ancient people, all was done which industry and art could do, to elicit the powers of the soil and the capabilities of its delightful and varied climate. Her plains, covered with a rich mould, yielded an abundant harvest without almost any labour. Her mountains were more scantily clothed; but means were taken to render these not less productive than the plains. The limestone rocks of Judea, arranged in regular parallel strata, and running along the sides of the hills, appear to have suggested to the husbandman the propriety of employing the terrace method of cultivation, and to have afforded him great facilities in carrying this plan into operation. To this cause are we to ascribe the circumstance, that the same mountains which at this hour are grey and withered, in the times of Israel and Judah were green and flourishing to the very top. Terraces were ranged round and round, from the bottom up to the summit, and earth was piled upon them. These erections were sometimes sown with wheat and barley; but it was more common to plant them with cucumbers, melons, pomegranates, vines, and fig-trees. The advantages of this method of cultivation are obvious and manifold. The air is allowed to circulate freely around the plant; and this con-

tributes greatly to its health. The springs and rain-water which in a country like ours descend into the valley and flow to the ocean, were there carefully husbanded, and made to water the numerous artificial gardens with which the sides of the mountains were clothed. In places where the erection of terraces was impossible, the olive was planted; and while the naked face of the mountain was covered with the lively azure of its foliage, its roots penetrating into the bosom of the rock, drew forth the "fatness" which rendered this tree so useful to the Israelite, and so valuable as an article of traffic with foreign nations. Thus hills, which at this moment are a bare rock, were then as luxuriant as the vales below; and while not inferior in point of cultivation, they were even more abundantly peopled. The hills of Judah and Ephraim were thickly planted with towns and villages, and sustained an incredible number of inhabitants. Their climate was more agreeable—their products were more varied—in war they were more capable of defence—and in many places they nourished a kind of short grass, which was more grateful to cattle than that of the plains, and imparted a rich and delicious flavour to their milk and butter; and the same causes render them better inhabited than the plains at this day. Of the ancient method of cultivation numerous traces are still visible in Palestine. The long desolation of the country has reduced its mountains, speaking generally, to their original state—a naked rock, thinly sprinkled over with a brownish soil. But in some parts the ruins of the former terraces remain; and in certain favoured districts the ancient method of

husbandry is still in full operation. The olive-woods of Samaria, and the country around Gaza, mantled with vineyards, present scenes not unworthy of other days. In Lebanon whole districts are terraced, and richly cultivated. Grain of all kinds may be seen waving in the breeze, and fruits of every name ripening on the bough.[1]

Thus have we attempted briefly to sketch the ancient condition of Palestine, in respect of soil, climate, products, and inhabitants. But how different the picture we have exhibited from that of the modern Judea. So complete is the desolation of Palestine at this day, that when the traveller enters it he is almost overpowered. Here nothing is to be seen but barren mountains, from whose rocky sides the sun's rays are flung back with intolerable fierceness—vast plains which the eye is fatigued to survey, with scarcely a single palm to enliven them—rivers flowing through wildernesses—no signs of cultivation—scarcely any signs of life, except here and there the Arab and his flock. His heart sinks as he surveys the desolation which surrounds him; and he needs to rouse himself by the remembrance, that the land in which he journeys was in ancient times the theatre of wonders.

Nor is this the only effect which the desolation of the land of Israel produces on the mind of the traveller. He finds it difficult to reconcile the accounts of its ancient fertility with its present appearance. His faith is staggered in the former history of the

[1] The chief authorities for this account of the soil and climate of Palestine are Volney, vol. i, pp. 218—249; Shaw, pp. 333, 344.

country. As he journeys over plains, bereft of every trace of cultivation, or toils amid mountains, where not a blade of grass is to be seen, and from which even the beasts of the earth appear to have fled, he can scarcely persuade himself that this is the same country of which so magnificent a picture is given in the book of truth. If this be indeed the "good land" which Jehovah gave to his chosen people, where are the verdure and beauty of its plains? where are its palm-trees? its hills clad with the olive? its rocks dropping honey? its vales covered with corn, which in their exuberant fertility were said to laugh to the hills which rejoiced on every side? What cause has wrought so sad a change on the appearance of this land, dried up all the sources of its fertility, and transformed it from one of the fairest to one of the dreariest regions on the earth?

To this question we shall attempt a brief reply. We premise that all the calamities of Judea are to be referred ultimately to the wrath of Heaven. They are the standing proofs of the truth of the prophets, whose predictions they have fully verified, and of the indignation of Jehovah, which still continues to be manifested against the sins of those by whom this country was possessed in past ages, and to whom it still of right belongs. But various instruments have been employed, and various causes have contributed to bring on Judea her predicted woes.

The first we mention, and perhaps the most influential, is the long occupation of the country by foreign nations. Since the times of the Romans, who cherished this, as they did all their provinces,

so far, at least, as the turbulent and factious spirit of the Jews would permit them, the various masters under whose power Judea has fallen, with singular impolicy have neglected to cultivate and improve the country. It is now upwards of a thousand years since she fell into the hands of the Saracens. Latterly, she has been governed by the Turks: and under the rule of this indolent and tyrannical race no art is encouraged, not even that of husbandry. In Syria human life is very insecure, property is still more so; and while the usual stimulants to ingenuity and labour are thus withdrawn, another effectual bar to all improvement exists in the shape of the oppressive exactions to which the inhabitants are constantly liable. It is not to be expected that the husbandman will sow, when it is just as likely that another will reap as himself; and of Palestine it may at present be affirmed, that there seed-time and harvest have ceased. The towns have all fallen into decay, and most of them into utter ruin, partly from the poverty of the country, partly from successive wars and invasions, and in part also from the indolent and barbarous habits of the race by whom the country is inhabited, who destroy every thing and repair nothing. Palestine has long since arrived at the last stage in the march to barbarism.

The tyranny of the Turks has been aided by the predatory habits of the Arabs. These hordes have come up on Judea from the deserts on the east and south. Wholly ignorant of the art of agriculture, they are content to feed their flocks on the rich grass which the plains of Palestine spontaneously produce. Although holding in utter contempt those of their race who devote themselves to the pursuits of hus-

bandry, they do not hesitate to avail themselves of the fruits of their labours; and it is difficult to say whether the peasant of the mountains (for few think of cultivating the plain) are more apprehensive of a visit from the tax-gatherer of the Pacha, or from the Bedouins, whose black tents are seen clustered on the plain below. Till the military energy of Mehemet Ali began to hold these plunderers somewhat in check, the peasant was often obliged to plough and reap with the musket slung behind him.

To these causes we are to add the destruction of the ancient cisterns. In these the rain-water was collected, and by small canals distributed over the fields; and this abundant irrigation led to a rapid and powerful vegetation under the warm sun of Syria. But now these cisterns and aqueducts are destroyed, the irrigation of the fields is at an end, and the same heat which in former ages covered them with the luxuriance of a garden, now scorches them into a desert. The country, moreover, is to a great degree deprived of trees. War, and the neglect of the inhabitants have led to this result. Many of the fruit-trees of Palestine, of which in ancient times the country was very rich, required a degree of culture far beyond either the skill or the patience of the inhabitants, and have consequently been allowed to perish. There is not at this day a single balsam-tree in the plain of Jericho—even its palms have almost totally disappeared. One solitary tree lingers near the spot where the city of palm-trees formerly stood. The soil is thus bereft of all shelter, and left exposed to the powerful action of a Syrian sun. The bare and treeless aspect of the country is the first thing which strikes the traveller on entering it.

"We see there," says Volney, "none of that gay carpeting of grass and flowers which decorate the meadows of Normandy and Flanders, nor those clumps of beautiful trees, which give that richness and animation to the landscapes of Burgundy and Brittany. As in Provence, the land of Syria has almost always a brown and parched aspect."[1]

Such are the causes which have reduced this once flourishing country to a desert. Her terraces have been demolished by the ravages of man and the storms of centuries—her canals have been filled up, and her herbs left to wither beneath the unmitigated influence of a powerful sun—the regular labours of the husbandman have been long suspended—war, famine, and pestilence have been frequent visitants in her—order, security, and peace have been unknown for ages—the Arabs of the desert have spoiled her, and the Turks have ruled her with a rod of iron; and the combined operation of all these causes has evolved, the very picture painted so long ago by the pencil of prophecy. The same sun still warms it, and the same fertility still sleeps in its bosom; but in the words of the prophet—"the land mourns and is laid waste, and has become as a desolate wilderness."

We shall now take a journey over the Land of Promise, for the purpose of ascertaining her actual condition at this moment. Having done so, we shall turn to the prophets, and enquire whether her present state agrees with what they foretold regarding her. The condition of her mountains will engage our attention first: afterwards we shall examine her plains and valleys.

[1] Volney, vol. ii, p. 235.

CHAPTER III.

MOUNTAINS OF LEBANON AND GILEAD.

Lebanon—Geographical and scriptural importance—Height of Libanus and Anti-libanus—Variety of temperature on its sides—Ascent—Lower region richly cultivated—Abounding in charming prospects—Volney's description of Lebanon—Second region covered with oak and cedar woods—Third region of pasture-land—Level plain on the side of the mountain—Upper Lebanon—Precipices and snows—Sublime view from summit—Cedars—Position on the mountain—Numbers—Appearance—Fulfilment of prophecy—Inhabitants—Hermon—Great height—Perpetual snows—Scriptural celebrity—Hills of Gilead—Only recently explored—Begin our journey opposite Jericho—Fertile and beautiful aspect of the country—Jabbok—Oaks of Bashan—Numerous ruins of cities—Present condition of the pasture-lands of Bashan—Fulfilment of prophecy—Salubrity of climate.

We are now to speak of Lebanon. This mountain forms an important feature in the landscape of Syria. Its position on the confines of the Holy Land, and the distinguished notice taken of it in the Scriptures, point it out as the first object of attention among the hills of Palestine.

Lebanon is not a single mountain, as one might suppose from finding it sometimes mentioned as such in the sacred writers, but a range of mountains, formed in the manner we have already described, by the westward bend of the great chain which rises in Syria.

In the ancient Greek writers this chain is known by the name of Libanus; and the eastern and parallel one by that of Anti-libanus.[1] In Scripture the term Lebanon is sometimes indiscriminately applied to both, as it frequently is by modern writers; but its strict, at least its most usual application in Scripture is to that part of the chain of Libanus which forms the northern boundary of Palestine, including also those mountains in the chain of Anti-libanus, which, at the point where this chain divides to form the two southern branches, take an eastward course, and appear to prolong the line across the country.

The height of Lebanon has never yet been accurately measured; the altitude of Libanus—the chain which fronts the coast, may be stated at about 10,000 feet:[2] the general elevation of the eastern range is lower; but in that chain several mountains occur whose height is greater than that of any in the chain of Libanus. As they rise above the line of perpetual snow, it may be safely affirmed, that their height cannot be less than 11,000 feet.

The great altitude of Lebanon allows its sides to enjoy great variety of temperature. In ascending to the top, the traveller passes through various degrees of cold, from the climate of the plains, which is almost a tropical one, till at last he reaches the summit where a temperature not exceeding that of Greenland prevails throughout a great part of the

[1] This is the name given to them by Strabo, who speaks of them as two chains which rise on the coast of Phenicia, and extend on the east to the neighbourhood of Damascus. He has not taken into view the extensive range of which Lebanon, in the limited use which he makes of the term, forms only a part.—Lib. xvi. Relandi. Palas. Illust., tom. I, p. 313.

[2] Volney, vol. i, p. 205.

year. This difference of temperature is rendered visible by the variety of productions with which the mountain is clothed, and the very different appearances it puts on at different altitudes. The sight of the mountain amply justifies the bold figure of the Arabian poets "the Sannin (Lebanon) bears winter on his head, spring upon his shoulders, and autumn in his bosom, while summer lies sleeping at his feet." The exact state of this celebrated mountain at this day cannot be better described, than by tracing the supposed course of a traveller from the bottom to the top. Leaving the plain below, the traveller first enters a highly cultivated region, where, in the words of lord Lindsay, nature rewards the toil of the husbandman by "pouring grain into his lap, and wine into his cup without measure."[1] In his course he meets numerous cottages and villages surrounded by corn fields, plantations of mulberries, or gardens of vines and fig-trees. The inhabitants of this region are more robust and healthy than those of the plain; their complexions are fairer, and the silver horn worn by the females, over which is thrown the long white veil which loosely envelopes their form, gives something of dignity to their appearance. The sides of the hills are here formed into terraces, and the spectator, on looking up, may discover the successive rows, rising like a flight of stairs, and running sometimes so far up the mountain, that he may count not fewer than 120 of these hanging gardens,[2] all watered by streams from the upper parts of Lebanon. Here too scenes of transcendent loveliness open at times, as if by enchantment, before the eyes

[1] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 218. [2] Volney, vol. i, p. 209.

of the traveller: on ascending a summit, or winding round its bottom, he comes suddenly on a village sweetly secluded in some quiet valley: he beholds the ravine or vale in which it is seated shut in on all sides by overhanging cliffs, verdant with vines and olives, musical with falling waters, and cooled by breezes from the mountain above. He gazes on the scene before him, and thinks of the happy valley in Rasselas. It is of this region of Lebanon that Volney has given the following description; than which there is not a more animated picture of this mountain in existence: "there, as in the Alps, he travels whole days together, to reach a place which was in sight at his departure; he winds, descends, skirts the hills, and climbs; and in this perpetual change it seems as if magic herself varied for him at every step the decorations of the scenery. Sometimes he sees villages gliding from the steep declivities on which they are built, and so arranged that the terraces of one row of houses serve as a street to those above them. Sometimes he sees a convent standing on a solitary height, like Mar-shaya, in the valley of the Tigris. Here a rock perforated by a torrent, and become a natural arch, like that of Nahr-el-Leben (the river of milk). There another rock, worn perpendicular, resembles a high wall. Frequently on the sides of hills he sees beds of stones stripped and detached by the waters, rising up like artificial ruins. In many places, the waters meeting with inclined beds, have excavated the intermediate earth, and formed caverns as at Nahr-el-Kelb (river of the dog), near Antoura: in others subterraneous channels are formed, through which flow rivulets for a part of the year,

as at Mar-Elias-el-Roum, and Mar-Hanna. These subterraneous rivulets are common throughout Syria; there are some near Damascus, at the sources of the Orontes, and at those of Jordan."[1]

Continuing his ascent, the traveller leaves behind him this region of corn and vines, terraced mountains, and falling waters, and enters on a tract of a much less agreeable character. The ground is now covered with woods of low oaks,[2] and valonidi. Ascending still higher, the oaks disappear, and dwarfish cedars take their place: their diminutive stature being atoned for by the delicious fragrance which they emit. Higher up still, the sides of the mountain are covered with yellow, white, red, and pink flowers, which afford abundant nourishment to bees: Lebanon being at this day renowned for its honey.[3]

After an ascent of nearly five hours, the traveller finds himself on a level plain, running along the side of the mountain. This plain, which divides the upper from the lower Lebanon, may be distinctly traced on both sides of Libanus.[4] Up to this point the mountain is capable of cultivation; and those parts which are not covered in the manner we have described, with woods of oak and cedar, afford excellent pasturage. In some parts the pastures can be compared only to those of the Alps. The numerous springs and the heavy dews which fall during the summer months, produce grass of a deeper tint than is to be seen in any other part of Syria. This is a great attraction to the Arabs, who accordingly visit this part of Lebanon during summer. The sight of

[1] Volney, vol. i, pp. 207, 208.
[2] Lindsay, vol. ii, pp. 207.
[3] Burckhardt, p. 18.
[4] Burckhart, p. 19.

their tents and of their numerous camels often astonishes the traveller, who did not expect to find them so high in the mountain.[1] Having reached this elevated plain, the traveller finds that he has still an ascent of two hours between him and the summit, and that the most toilsome and dangerous of the whole journey—his route now lying, for the most part, over fields of snow, unless in the very middle of summer. The vegetation is still continued, but rapidly becomes more scanty, and at last gives place to barren rocks, around which low oaks and shrubs peep up. At times, the path winds along the edge of frightful precipices, which the traveller cannot contemplate without becoming giddy. He closes his eyes, drops the rein, and resigns himself to his mule, which calmly picks his way from crag to crag, with an instinct which proves a safer guide than the reason of his master.[2] At other times the track lies over snows of amazing depth, in which the foot-prints of wild animals are distinctly visible, reminding the traveller that these are the only tenants of this and the adjoining regions of Lebanon. Where not concealed by snow, the top of the mountain is found to be composed of calcareous rock, so splintered by the action of the weather as to have the appearance of being covered with thin layers of white slates.[3] Having traversed this last, the traveller finds himself on the lofty and frozen summits of Lebanon, which, barren and desolate as they seem, are not without their use in the economy of the country. As a conservatory of snows, which melt slowly dur-

[1] Burckhardt, p. 23. [2] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 259.
[3] Maundrell, p. 221; Burckhardt, p. 19.

ing the heats of summer, they feed the springs and fountains at the bottom; and thus contribute, in no insignificant degree, to the fertility and beauty of the plains below.

From the minute description we have given of it, a very good idea may be formed of the condition and appearance of this celebrated mountain. Around its bottom is a girdle of terraced hills. Higher up is a zone of oak and cedar. Next comes a belt of green pastures and flowery herbs. Above all, are seen the barren, craggy, and snow-covered heights of the upper Lebanon. This is the general arrangement; but we are not to understand that it is followed in all parts of the mountain. In some places Lebanon is barren from its bottom to its summit. The ascent is difficult; but the view from the top amply rewards the traveller for all the fatigue and danger he has encountered. On the south, he beholds the land of promise spread out at his feet. On the west, the blue and level surface of the Mediterranean presents to the eye an almost boundless horizon. On the east, the view stretches across the valley of Baalbec to the chain of Anti-libanus, the lofty summits of which prevent the eye from resting on the domes and gardens of Damascus. Immediately below him on the west, the spectator can command the whole line of coast adjoining Lebanon—its noble bays, formed by the bold projections of the mountain-ridges; and if not obscured by clouds and tempests, which sometimes gather at his feet, he can contemplate the numerous glens and ravines formed by the lateral branches of the mountain, lying far beneath him in tranquil and secluded beauty, clothed with

the olive and the fig-tree, and watered by numerous cascades, which, falling from the rocks, unite and form a torrent in the bottom, filling the vale, as it flows through it, with its agreeable murmur.

The general condition of the mountain, but especially of its cedars, forms an interesting and striking illustration of the truth of prophecy. In the days of Solomon, these cedars flourished on Lebanon in mighty forests, and grew to an enormous bulk. A thousand generations rose and sank on the plains below; but these unrivalled productions of the vegetable world continued to flourish, and gave promise of a perpetuity almost equal to that of the mountain on which they grew. But against these "trees of God" were the prophets commissioned to denounce the curse; and on them, at this day, has that curse taken effect. "The high ones of stature," said Isaiah, addressing himself to Lebanon, "shall be hewn down."[1] The same word which swept from the plains of Israel all their beauty—which laid her palaces prostrate in the dust—has smitten also the strength of her cedars: and all that remain at this day of the "high ones of stature," which once covered the mountain in magnificent forests, amount only to seven. The old cedars have been gradually decreasing during the past two centuries, till at last they have dwindled down to this insignificant number. There are numerous forests of young cedars on the mountain; but of these we do not speak. We confine our view to those against which the curse was denounced—the "high ones of stature." Belloni, in 1550, counted twenty-eight. Ranwolf,

[1] Isaiah, x, 33.

25 years after, found only twenty-four. Maundrell, who visited Lebanon in 1696, saw only sixteen.[1] Burckhardt, in 1810, counted eleven or twelve.[2] Richardson, in 1818, could discover only seven.[3] Lord Lindsay, who visited Lebanon in 1837, confirms the account of Richardson,—"Of the giants," says he, "there are seven standing very near each other, all on the same hill."[4] He tells us however, that he found other cedars of the same age, to the number of three or four, growing on another part of the hill. The words of the prophet are fulfilled. "Lebanon is hewn down."[5]

These patriarchal trees grow in a clump on the west side of Lebanon, about four hours' journey from the bottom, on the edge of the plain we have already spoken of, which forms the division between the upper and lower Lebanon. The mountain around them is so arranged, that they appear to stand in a vast amphitheatre which opens to the west: while the upper Lebanon forms the back ground, high hills rise on the north and south of them.[6] They are situated a little farther south than the latitude of Tripoli. "As we entered the grove," says lord Lindsay, "the air was quite perfumed with their odour—'the smell of Lebanon.'"[7] The stems of the young trees are tall and beautiful, but the trunks of the old ones are gnarled and twisted: the foliage is gathered in an immense mass at the top, and casts a goodly shade. Their size is enormous. Richard-

[1] Maundrell. p. 225.
[2] Burckhardt. p. 19.
[3] Richardson.
[4] Lindsay. vol. ii, p. 209.
[5] Isaiah, xxxiii, 9.
[6] Lindsay. vol. ii, p. 208.
[7] Richardson.

son measured one of them, not the largest in the clump, and found that the trunk was thirty-two feet in circumference.[1] Another measured by Maundrell was found to be "twelve yards six inches in girth, and yet sound; and thirty-seven yards in the spread of its boughs. At about five or six yards from the ground, it was divided into four limbs, each of which was equal to a great tree."[2]

The modern cedars are never allowed to attain any great size; the mountaineers, Elliot informs us, cut them down for "the sake of their charcoal and tar."[3] The ancient inhabitants of Judea, as well as the surrounding nations, set a high value on the cedar, on the ground of its important use in architecture: and never could they have anticipated a time, when the cedars of Lebanon would be devoted to so ignoble a purpose. Yet such is their fate in modern times: —to be cut down and burned into charcoal.[4] "Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness, and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire. And shall consume the glory of his forest." "Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars."

The prophet anticipates a time when the cedar should perish from the soil, in which it had so long flourished, and the fir-tree alone should survive to mourn the fall of its loftier brother: "Howl, fir-tree; for the cedar is fallen."[5] In striking accordance with this prediction is the remark of Elliot, who,

[1] Pliny Fisk's Memoir. p. 301.
[2] Maundrell. p. 225.
[3] Elliot. vol. ii, p. 256.
[4] Isaiah, x, 16, 18.
[5] Zechariah, xi, 1.

overlooking the present dwarfish race of cedars, as unworthy of notice, says of Lebanon, "Almost the only tree it nourishes is the fir." "The cedars that were once the glory of Lebanon have deserted it, and are replaced by the large umbrella-topped fir."[1]

Lebanon is inhabited by two nations, the Maronites, and the Druses. The Druses are scattered over Syria, from the latitude of Tripoli, to the plains of Galilee on the south, and the mountains of the Hauran on the east. The conflicting statements of travellers show, that the religious opinions, as well as the descent of this extraordinary race, are still a mystery. The Maronites, who are members of the Roman Catholic church, occupy the central regions of Lebanon. This part of the mountain is covered with convents. On entering this region the traveller hears no longer the cry of the Mussulman, proclaiming from the minaret, the time of day, or the hours of prayer: the ear is saluted with a continual ringing of bells, from the tops of the convents; which, amid the smiling valleys, and stillness which reigns everywhere, has a most pleasing effect, and would almost persuade the traveller that the scene is not in Turkey. These religious houses are so numerous in some parts of the mountain, that twenty of them may be found within hearing of each other's bells.[2] Of these convents, Canobin is the most celebrated, as well as the most singular in its position. It is placed in a deep ravine, nearly half way up the precipice, and looks as if suspended in the

[1] Elliot. vol. ii, p. 255.

[2] Narrative of Rev. L. Way. Jewish Expositor, vol. ix, p. 46.

air. The visitor ascends by a long flight of steps hewn in the rock. Below is a frightful chasm through which the Kadisha, or holy river, flows: overhead the spectator perceives forests of oak, while the rock shoots up into towering pinnacles, breaking the waters which descend from above, which are thus formed into a thousand cascades. These convents are the first schools of Arabic in the world; but in other respects the monks who live in them are contemptible persons enough. Till the visit of Volney, the monks of Mar Hanna had never heard of the doctrine of the earth's annual revolution round the sun: the traveller rather incautiously divulged it, and by doing so, gave so deep offence to the brotherhood, that he had nearly brought upon himself the doom of Galileo in a former age.[1]

Such is the present aspect and condition of Lebanon. This magnificent rampart of mountains, forests, and snows, was obviously designed, to defend the dwelling of the chosen people from the hostile incursions of the Assyrian. Its beauty attracted the eyes of Moses from the plains of Moab, and encreased the severity of the command, which enjoined him to go up to Nebo and die. "I pray thee," said he, when entreating that the sentence which forbade his entrance into the Land of Promise might be revoked, "let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordon, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon."[2] In the inspired page it is often employed as the symbol of promised blessings, of which its fertility and grandeur rendered it a fitting type. When the prophet foretells the change which awaits the Gentile

[1] Volney, vol. ii, p. 294. [2] Deuteronomy, iii, 25.

world under the reign of the Messiah, he borrows his imagery from hence; "the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it."[1] Its general condition, at this day, is such as the prophets foretold: notwithstanding that a considerable portion of the lower region is cultivated, and that there many scenes of great beauty are to be met with; yet when we take into account the great extent lying, in the words of a traveller "barren and desolate,"[2] while, on the authority of Burckhardt, the mountain is capable of being cultivated up to within two hours of the top; and when we think, moreover, that the day of the Lord has been upon all its cedars, and that in the great chain of Anti-libanus there are scarcely any inhabitants; we must admit that the ancient glory of Lebanon has departed, and that a more compendious and accurate description of its present state cannot be found, than that implied in the words of the prophet, "Lebanon is ashamed."[3]

The near neighbourhood of HERMON to the mountain we have just described, entitles it to be noticed in the next place. Not being of any great historical renown, nor the subject of any prophecy, save of such as apply to the mountains of Israel generally, a lengthened notice of Hermon would be unnecessary, even granting that the materials for such a purpose were more numerous than they are. We can do little more than indicate its site and general appearance. Burckhardt, Buckingham,[4] and Elliot,[5] are the only travellers who mention it, and they have

[1] Isaiah, xxxv, 2. [2] Maundrell, p. 222.
[3] Isaiah, xxxiii, 9. Robinson, adverting to the position of the cedars of Lebanon, at the foot of the higher division of the mountain, says, "They stand in a hollow as if ashamed."—Robinson, vol. ii, p. 86. [4] Burckhardt, p. 287. [5] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 317.

bestowed on it merely a passing notice. On the east of the Jordan, and in a line with the source of that river, is seen a ridge of lofty mountains, forming, on the north and north-east, the boundary of the Trans-Jordanic possessions of Israel. This is the Mount Hermon of the Scriptures; and the Djebel El Shiekh of the Arabs. It is in fact a part of the chain of Anti-libanus, and is situated at the point where the chain divides to send off the two southern branches, which run on either side of the Jordan. Its great height (it is thought the highest peak in Syria), and the perpetual snows of its summit, render it a well marked object from almost every part of Samaria and Galilee, and from the plains of the Hauran on the east. The snows of the top sometimes run in lengthened streaks down its sides, and this, says Elliot, has suggested to the vivacious fancy of the Orientals a resemblance in this mountain "to the hoary head and venerable beard of a shiekh:" and hence its name "the old man's mountain." We are rather disposed to think that its name indicates its great height, and may be freely translated, the monarch of the hills.

When put in opposition to Tabor, which stood in a quarter of the country exactly opposite, Hermon is beautifully used by the Hebrew poets to denote the east, as the former mountain does the west: "The north and the south, thou hast created them; Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name." [1] It is celebrated by the Psalmist, for its dews: "As the dew of Hermon, that descended on the mountains of Zion." [2] And Elliot describes it, as still "remarkable" for its "heavy dews." [3] Solomon speaks of

[1] Ps. lxxxix, 12. [2] Ps. cxxxiii, 3. [3] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 137.

it as a well-known resort of wild animals, "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse; with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon; from the lions' dens; from the mountains of the leopards." [1] And it is still haunted by beasts of prey, Buckingham could not find the names mentioned in this passage, but tells us, that wolves and other wild beasts were said to exist here, and leopards were reported to be common.[2] This mountain was famous both in the idolatry of the Israelites, and the mythology of the Greeks. Here, under the snows of Hermon, and amid the waters which went forth from this spot to fertilize the land (for the springs of Hermon assisted to form the Jordan) stood the Golden Calf which Jeroboam erected to seduce the ten tribes, at once, from the house of David, and the worship of Jehovah: and here, in a later age, the groves flourished in which the Greeks performed idolatrous rites in honour of Pan.

We have applied the name to a single mountain —the lofty and snow-covered summit, which from afar points out to the traveller the source of the Jordan; and such we believe is the usual application of the term Hermon in the sacred writers: but in truth Hermon is prolonged in a range of hills which, under the name of El-Heish,[3] runs in a south-east direction, for about thirty miles, and forms the eastern boundary of the ancient territory of Manasseh. This is no doubt "the land of the Hermonites"—the scene of the noble elegy [4] which David composed, when the revolt of Absalom forced him to flee from

[1] Song, ii, 8. [2] Buckingham, Arab Tribes, p. 395.
[3] Burckhardt, p. 286. [4] Psalm xlii.

the capital. The monarch and his veteran soldiers betook themselves to the woods and fastnesses of Hermon, and from this, the region of his temporary sojourn, the imagery of his beautiful psalm is borrowed:—the cool brook—the panting hart—"so panteth my soul after thee, O God." "Therefore will I remember thee, from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar." The range we have named; the Djebel Heish terminates about three hours and a half before reaching the banks of the Hieromax.[1]

As we are now on the east of the Jordan, before entering Palestine proper, we shall pass south, and take a survey of the hills of Gilead. The range of Hermon, we have said, terminates about three hours and a half (eleven miles) north of the Hieromax: about the same distance south of that river begins the range of Gilead.[2] Rising on the southern border of Manasseh, the hills of this range traverse the ancient territory of the tribe of Gad, and terminate about six miles south of the river Jabbok. Their length, in a straight line, may be estimated at about twenty-five miles. Jacob, on his return from Padan-aram, traversed these mountains; on their summit he was overtaken by his uncle Laban, who had pursued him with a hostile intention, but being forbidden of God in a dream, he refrained from doing him injury. The parties, on their meeting, entered into a friendly

[1] In the east there are no mile-stones, and distances are computed in days and hours. We have followed this method in several instances; but the reader may easily find the distance in English miles, by allowing three miles for every hour—the usual pace of the camel or mule.

[2] See note A at the end of the volume.

compact, and a heap of stones was raised on the summit of the hill in token of the transaction: and from that day the mountains were termed Galeed or Gilead —the mountains of the heap.[1] Till the beginning of the present century, the territory of Gilead, and indeed the eastern possessions of Israel generally, were an "unknown land:" no one had crossed the Jordan, for the purpose of exploring the country lying beyond it, which, up to the time we have indicated, was generally believed to be a desert, and, as such represented in our maps: judge then of the surprise of the traveller when, on entering this region for the first time, he found its fertile soil, and rich prospects, not surpassed, and scarcely equalled, by the finest parts of Samaria and Galilee. Around it is thrown a rampart of barren mountains, but these once passed, scenes of extraordinary beauty and grandeur disclose themselves to the eye, resembling rather what we might expect to meet in a long inhabited and highly cultivated country, than in this neglected land. As we shall not again return to the east of the Jordan, at least till we come to survey the fallen cities of Ammon and Moab, we shall be more minute and lengthened in our descriptions of this part of the country, than might seem to be necessary, for the mere purpose of illustrating the hills of Gilead. We are also to bear in mind, that the region of which we speak is beyond the limits of the Land of Promise, strictly considered, and that here, we are not to look for so evident traces of the curse, as in the country west of the Jordan, against which it was more emphatically denounced.[2]

[1] Genesis, xxxi.

[2] It is singular that both Burckhardt and Lindsay speak

We had arrived on the level plains of Bashan, near the commencement of the Gilead range; let us now reverse the order in which we were proceeding, and supposing ourselves transported to a point on the Jordan, nearly as far south as Jericho, let us there begin our journey, and examine the country in our progress northwards.[1] Leaving the Jordan then, and directing our course to the north-east, we begin our ascent over the hills which bound in that direction the plain of Jericho: having reached their top, we descend on the other side, by a rugged track which leads down into a deep glen. Traversing this glen, we again begin to ascend: a winding path leads us to the summit of a second and third range of barren mountains, and scarcely have we passed them, when we find ourselves on a level plain, not much inferior in height to the mountains themselves, and certainly eight hundred feet above the level of the Jordan.[2] Here we are all at once surprised by the new character which the country assumes. "We are now in a land of extraordinary richness, abounding with the most beautiful prospects, clothed with thick forests, varied with verdant slopes, and possessing extensive plains of a fine red soil; now covered with thistles as the best proof of its fertility, and yielding in nothing to the

of Mount Gilead as being on the south of Zerkah (Jabbok.) Jacob crossed the Jabbok after the transaction between him and Laban; and as that transaction took place on the top of Gilead, it is clear, that the Mount Gilead of Scripture lay on the north of that river. There can be no objections however against extending the Gilead range, as we have done, some six or eight miles south of the Nahr-el-Zerkah.

[1] The route followed by Buckingham, who has given the fullest account of this part of the country.

[2] Buckingham, Palestine, vol. ii, p. 22.

celebrated plains of Zebulon and Esdraelon in Galilee and Samaria.[1]

Still continuing our course, in a north-east direction, the fertile and beautiful aspect of the country not only continues but improves: the hills around are clothed with wild olives, oaks, and pine trees, while the little dells, which are amply furnished with water and pasturage, often contain an encampment of Arabs with their flocks. "The path," says Lindsay, "wound through thickets of the most luxuriant growth, and of every shade of verdure, frequently overshadowing the road, and diffusing a delicious coolness, though a delightful fresh breeze so allayed the heat that it was never oppressive; while the cooing of wood-pigeons, the calling of partridges—magnificent birds as large as pheasants,—the incessant hum of insects, and hiss of grasshoppers singing in the trees as happy as kings, after breakfasting on the dews of Mount Gilead—and the thought that gave zest to it all, that this was Mount Gilead, made up a full cup of enjoyment."[2]

Pursuing our way through scenery of this description, we arrive at length on the banks of the Nahr-el-Zerka, the Jabbok of the Scriptures. On this very stream, Jacob and his company halted, nearly four thousand years ago, on their journey from Padan-aram: and here the patriarch received the alarming intelligence of the approach of his brother Esau with four hundred men. Making such arrangements as the time admitted of, he sent his company over the brook; "and Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day,"[3]

[1] Buckingham, vol. ii, p. 104. [2] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 122.
[3] Genesis, xxxii, 24.

We are now on the scene of this singular conflict, and anxious to learn the appearance, at this day, of so memorable a spot. The stream flows through a deep ravine, of wild and romantic beauty; in some places it looks as if a violent convulsion of nature had rent the mountain to afford a passage for the waters: the height of the cliffs is not less than five hundred feet, while the space between them is not greater than a hundred yards. The banks of the stream are so thickly wooded with oleander, and plane trees, wild olives, almonds, and tall waving reeds, that the water cannot be seen by looking down upon it from the cliff, though the murmur of its flow is distinctly heard, echoing through its long narrow channel. Winding paths lead down to the bottom, the cliffs in all parts too steep to allow the traveller to go directly down. "The river where we crossed it," says Buckingham, "was not more than ten yards wide; but it was deeper than the Jordan, and nearly as rapid; so that we had some difficulty in fording it. As it ran in a rocky bed its waters were clear, and we found their taste agreeable."[1]

Crossing the Jabbok, we leave the country of the Amorites, of which this river formed the northern boundary, and enter on the lands of Ogg, king of Bashan. The hills here are higher than those on the south of the Zerkah: and the views with which the country abounds are equal in beauty and superior in grandeur to those through which we have already passed.[2] Every winding of the path brings under the eye the most magnificent landscapes, lofty mountains, wooded slopes, well-watered meadows, while flocks

[1] Buckingham, vol. i, p. 109. [2] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 124.

and herds give animation to the picture. The fellahs (Arab husbandmen) who live in this part of Gilead cultivate some of the lands, and fields covered with corn now begin to make their appearance.[1] Among the woods the oak is frequently met with,[2] a circumstance that reminds us, that we are now approaching a region which of old was not less celebrated for its oaks than Lebanon was for its cedars. Going forward still in a north-east direction, the broken arches and tall columns of Gerasa rise before us; but we cannot stop at present, to examine this site of departed splendour: we shall return to it when we come to speak of the cities of Israel. Leaving Gerasa, we pass on to examine the country to the north of it. The soil continues fertile, and the aspect of the landscape still as favourable: a few hours brings us to the village of Soof; and a little beyond it we enter a forest of oaks, which continues for four or five miles, when the country becomes clear of wood, and scenes of a park-like character open before us. Traversing this open region, the beautifully wooded country again returns; the remains no doubt of those forests of oak for which this region was one so celebrated:[3] "It was forest scenery of the noblest character," says lord Lindsay, "next to that of Old England, with which none that I ever saw can stand comparison."[4] As we advance the wood gradually grows thinner, and we again emerge on an open country, covered with a fine green turf, lying neglected at present, but bearing marks of having been cultivated in former times, seeing the ancient enclosures of its fields are still

[1] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 126.
[2] Buckingham, vol. ii, p. 113.
[3] Ezekiel, xxvi, 7.
[4] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 127.

visible.[1] In this neighbourhood too we meet with the ruins of numerous towns. It is evident that many ages of barbarism and neglect have passed over the country, since the cities which once flourished on these sites fell into decay, for the ground they occupied is now covered with wood: the gloom and silence of the forest rest above the spot which, in ages long gone by, was the dwelling of gay and busy multitudes, and the traveller is made aware that he is on the site of a ruined city, by the large hewn blocks which peep up through the soil, the broken pottery strewed over its surface, and the fountains generally found in the neighbourhood.[2] The broken pottery always seen on such sites, is the first indication the traveller meets with that he is in the neighbourhood of some ancient ruin; these relics of the domestic utensils of the former inhabitants, point to times when a much higher civilization, and a far greater degree of domestic refinement and comfort prevailed in these countries than any thing of the kind which is to be found there at this day. No similar vessels are used by the present inhabitants. The few modern villages which exist in Gilead are placed generally on the sites of the former cities. Their population is chiefly Mahommedan, with a few Christian families, belonging to the Greek Church, as ignorant and superstitious as the Moslems themselves: the ground around is occupied with corn-fields and olive yards, the signs of modern cultivation: while the memorials of past magnificence are seen in the wells of Roman construction, broken shafts of pillars, sarcophagi, holes hewn in the rocks for the reception of the dead

[1] Buckingham, vol. ii, pp. 244, 245. [2] Ib., Arab Tribes, p. 134.

and other vestiges which time has spared.[1] These remarks apply chiefly to the district of Adjeloon. It is now impossible to ascertain the exact limits of the land of Gilead; but there can be no doubt that the district we have named lay within these limits, and nearly in the centre of the country, and formed one of the most fertile and beautiful parts of the whole land.

Going forward from the point we have already indicated, and still keeping a northerly direction, the aspect of the country rapidly changes for the worse: the hills assume a bare and desolate appearance, the soil grows thinner, few patches are cultivated, or are fit for cultivation, and the dreariness of the prospect increases, till at last the hills sink into the plain. We may now consider ourselves as beyond the limits of the ancient Gilead, and again arrived on the low pasture grounds of Bashan—the broad plain we have already indicated, lying between the Hermon and the Gilead range, and existing in the country, though not in the maps.

This plain is less fertile than the hilly region we have just traversed. We are surprised to find it so, seeing it enjoyed in ancient times the character of a rich pastural country. Its greater sterility at this moment is owing perhaps to the want of wood and water, in the absence of all cultivation. In Gilead there is almost no cultivation, it is true, but the mountains produce numerous streams, which irrigate the soil, and thus the hilly slopes and valleys are covered with a luxuriance of wild herbage, to which, together with its woods, all the beauty and richness of the prospect are owing; but there is nothing of

[1] Buckingham, Arab Tribes, p. 135.

this kind in the level plain on which we have now arrived: no mountain streams to produce a natural irrigation in the absence of man, and hence the aspect of greater barrenness. This plain appears to have comprised the ancient districts of Argob, and Bashan: the former of which was no doubt situated on the north of the Jarmouk, (Hieromax,) and the latter on the south of that river, extending a short way, it is probable, into the hilly region adjoining.[1] The whole of these countries, north of the river Arnon to mount Hermon, were conquered and taken possession of by Israel before they crossed the Jordan.[2] "Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle; and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle,"[3] they came to Moses, and the princes of the congregation, and requested that a possession might be assigned to them, in the rich pasture lands on the east of the Jordan; their wish was granted: and here amidst the hills of Gilead, and the fertile plains on the north and south of it, the two tribes and a half were located. In ancient times this part of the country appears to have nourished a race of men of gigantic stature; speaking of its conquest, Moses says, "Only Ogg, king of Bashan, remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bed-stead was a bed-stead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man;" and again, "all the

[1] It appears extremely doubtful whether Argob was distinct from Basban; if so, the division certainly was such as we have indicated above.

[2] Deuteronomy, ii, iii. [3] Numbers, xxxii.

region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants."[1] When the Israelites conquered it, they found the country covered with numerous and strong towns: the district of Argob contained not fewer than three score cities, with "high walls," and "brazen bars," besides "unwalled towns a great many."[2] The multitude of ruins with which it is covered at this day, shows that it was once thickly peopled, and continued to be so at an age long posterior to that of the Conquest. And the mention which the Scripture makes of the bulls of Bashan proves likewise, that it long retained its eminence as a rich pastoral country. The few spots under cultivation at present yield twenty-five times the seed sown.[3] The whole plain, between the eastern shore of Tiberias, and the termination of the Djebel-el-Heish, which Burckhardt considers as strictly the Argob of Scripture, is lying at this moment "uncultivated, and overgrown with a wild herb called khob, which camels and cows feed upon."[4] A statement agreeing with the character which the Scriptures assign to it. Up to the hills we have just named,—the El Heish, the soil of the plain is black; beyond this point it begins to be of the same red colour as the Hauran earth: here crops of wheat and barley are often seen.[5] The following account is given by Elliot of this plain, who traversed the whole of it on his way from Damascus to the lake of Tiberias. "Pursuing our course through Jedoor, by some supposed to have been the country of the Gadarenes,

[1] Deuteronomy, iii, 11, 13.
[2] Deuteronomy, iii, 4, 5; 1 Kings, iv, 13. [3] Burckhardt, p. 283.
[4] Burckhardt, p. 281. [5] Burckhadrt, p. 283.

the long chain of Bashan bounded our view on the south, till we reached Nowa, the ancient Neve.[1] This, like Sanamein and several other towns and villages in the road, is a heap of ruins. Population seems to have decreased from thousands to hundreds, and from hundreds to decades: what were once cities of considerable magnitude are now wretched villages, and large towns have not a single tenant to perpetuate the memory of their name." "From Nowa to Feek[2] the road crosses a vast plain destitute of cultivation and inhabitants. Nothing is seen but the ruins of tenantless villages and towns in every direction, with multitudes of hawks and herons occupying the spots deserted by man."[3] Such is the present aspect of a district, which, in the times of Israel, was not inferior in point of fertility to any of the countries on the east of the Jordan, "Bashan languisheth."[4]

Not only was it foretold that the pastures of Bashan should languish; "the day of the Lord," said Isaiah, "shall be upon all the oaks of Bashan."[5] The woods in the interior of Gilead, occurring in a deserted country, strike the traveller as magnificent, and remind him of scenes which he has witnessed nearer home, but with regard to the northern part of our route, which lay within the limits of the ancient Bashan, there is scarcely a tree to be seen: and even as to Adjeloon, where the oak still grows abundantly, neither the number nor the beauty of these trees is such as to entitle them to their ancient fame; we

[1] Nowa is situated a little east of the termination of the Hermon range. [2] Feek is situated near the eastern shore of the lake of Tiberias. [3] Elliot, vol. ii, pp. 325, 327.
[4] Nahum, i, 4. [5] Isaiah, ii, 12, 13.

may now address them in the words of the prophet: "Howl, O ye oaks of Bashan, for the forest of the vintage is come down."[1]

With regard to the region we have now gone over, we have only one other remark to make. It lies, as we have already stated, beyond the limits of Palestine proper, and therefore the curse pointed against the Land of Promise is not to be understood as applying so particularly to this part of the country, as to that on the west of the Jordan, and at this day there is a marked difference beteen the two—so far atleast as regards all the countries north of the Arnon. This difference has been well described by Buckingham, with whose words we shall close our remarks on the Trans-Jordanic possessions of Israel. "The soil is so generally fertile as to be capable of producing almost any thing that is required; and while the valleys abound with corn-fields and olive grounds, the upland slopes of the hills are planted with vines, and the summits of the mountains are clothed with the trees of the coldest regions. The climate is really delightful: a clear deep blue sky, a pure air, a warm summer in the valleys and plains, a snowy winter on the mountain tops, with all the finest shades of gradation between these two extremes, furnish every variety of temperature and atmosphere that can be desired by man. The strongest proof that could be given of its salubrity, is the remarkable fact, that not one maimed, deformed, or sickly-looking person any where met our sight during the whole period of my being in this part of the country, though we saw new faces, and came in contact with great num-

[1] Zechariah, xi, 2.

bers of persons every day.[1] Indeed this portion of the country included in the districts of Belkah and Adjeloon, on the east of the Jordan, is as superior to the Promised Land on the west of that stream, as the most romantic and beautiful parts of Devonshire are to the bleak hills and barren heaths of the adjoining county of Cornwall."[2]

[1] The reader will observe how the account of Buckingham regarding the salubrity of the climate, and the bodily strength of the inhabitants, authenticates the statement of the Bible, according to which, all these countries on the east of the Jordan, were inhabited, in the early ages, by a race of giants. See Deuteronomy, ii, iii. [2] Buckingham, 'Arab Tribes,' p. 141.

CHAPTER IV.

MOUNTAINS OF PALESTINE.

Tabor—Beauty of its appearance—Conspicuous position—Ascent—Surface covered with thickets of oak, etc.—Plain at the top—Magnificent prospect from summit—Historical celebrity—Hills of Hermon and Gilboa—Mount Carmel—Ancient 'excellency'—Elijah and the priests of Baal—Fulfilment of prophecy—Quarantania, the mountain of temptation—Difficulty of ascent—Grottos—Desolate character of neighbouring scenery—Mount of Olives—Present desolate aspect—Appearance of Jerusalem as seen from Olivet—Reflections—Mountainous region west of Dead sea—En-gedi—Carmel—Convent of St. Saba—Desolate character generally of the mountains of Palestine—Instances from travellers—Fulfilment of prophecy.

We shall now cross the Jordan, and examine the principal mountains on the west of it. Descending the stream as far as Bysan, (Bethshan of Scripture,) the great plain of Esdraelon here opens before us, running, with scarcely a single interruption, across the country, in a north-west direction, to the shores of the "Great sea." On the north side of this noble plain rises the bold and beautiful Mount Tabor, the Itabyrion of the Greeks, and the Djebel-el-Tor of the natives. A journey of about five hours along the plain brings us to its base; we have passed in our progress, without noticing them, the hills of the little Hermon, and Gilboa; not with-



MOUNT TABOR.

out design, as they may be best surveyed from the top of the mountain we are about to ascend.

Tabor has no equal among the hills of Palestine, uniting in itself the glory of Lebanon and the excellency of Carmel. It stands apart, as if proud to display its beautiful proportions and unrivalled symmetry: its figure is that of a "truncated cone;"[1] its height has been guessed not to exceed a thousand feet from the plain.[2] [3] It stands on the confines of the tribe of Issachar, having the land of Zebulon on the north.[4] Its great height, beautiful shape, and prominent position, rising abruptly in a level plain, render it a well marked object throughout the surrounding district: whether the traveller skirt the promontory of Carmel, or wander by the shores of Gennesareth, or climb the hills of Nazareth, or journey along the plain, the beauty of Tabor is always before him, relieving the eye, fatigued perhaps by the universal sterility and desolation which reign around. The perpetual verdure of this mountain, which has excited the wonder and delight of all travellers, appears to be chiefly owing to the heavy dews which fall on it during night, and the thick clouds which during a great part of summer cover its summit in the morning, but break up at noon.[5] The traveller who would ascend its top must go round the base of the mountain, and begin his journey upwards on the north-side: a winding path, which he may easily traverse on horseback, leads him through

[1] Burckhardt, p. 334. [2] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 363.

[3] Stephens reckons it 3000 feet in height. This estimate is too great, for the ascent is easily accomplished in an hour, though the path winds very much.

[4] Relandi Palestina, tom. i, cap. 51. [5] Burckhardt, p. 335.

thickets of stunted oaks, olives, and pistachio trees, while the ground at their bottom, as well as the whole face of the mountain, is covered with grass and wild flowers. The wooded parts afford a cover to wild boars, and other animals, which the Arabs often come hither to hunt. After winding several times round the mountain, and thus enjoying the prospect afforded from all its sides, the traveller at last reaches its summit. Here he finds an oval plain, of about a quarter of a mile in length;[1] the east end of which is cumbered with the ruins of the military and religious buildings which have successively occupied the summit of Tabor, the west end forms a beautiful table of luxuriant grass and odoriferous herbs, which retain their perfume even in the middle of winter. Part of this plain is sometimes cultivated by Arab husbandmen; but this rarely happens; when Joliffe visited the mountain there was not the slightest symptom of cultivation to be seen on any part of it.[2] Such is its usual state: its beauty is entirely that with which a fertile soil and the heavy dews unite in clothing it. Tabor commands the finest prospect which is any where to be had of the great plain of Esdraelon; the condition of the fields around, as seen from its summit, is such as powerfully to remind the spectator of the denunciation of the prophet. "Here," says Mariti, "you behold an immensity of plains interspersed with hamlets, fortresses, and heaps of ruins."[3] "I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord."[4]

[1] Buckingham, vol. i, pp. 160, 161.
[2] Joliffe, vol. i, p. 41.
[3] Mariti, vol. ii, p. 181.
[4] Jeremiah, iv, 26.

If we lift our eyes from the plain immediately below, and extend our gaze around, we behold a scene of inexpressible grandeur, every object in which gives birth to associations of the most solemn kind, and awakens the remembrance of events of eternal renown. In the distant north-west appears Mount Carmel; its foot laved by the river Kishon, and its summit erewhile the scene where Elijah contended with an idolatrous king, and where the great controversy between Baal and Jehovah was decided by fire from heaven. Turning to the south, we behold the mountains of Samaria running from west to east, and bounding the plain: we think of the day when the chariot of Ahab rolled along their foot, as the monarch sped before the storm. Immediately in front of the mountains we have just named, are the hills of Gilboa, where "the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away:" and still nearer to us, and in the same direction, we behold the little Hermon, and at its foot, the villages of Endor, and Nain where the Saviour of men bound up the broken heart of the widow, by recalling her son to life. Turning to the east, the eye rests on a region where the Son of God often journeyed, and where a great part of his ministry was discharged: we obtain a glimpse of the lake of Gennesareth, sleeping peacefully amid the mountains, whose dark and lofty summits invest it with an air of solemn grandeur. To the south of the lake is seen part of the plain of Jericho: beyond are the hills of the Hauran; the glittering top of the great Hermon, and the peaks of the Anti-Lebanon chain. In the north are the hills of Nazareth, running in successive ranges, and in lines parallel to

the mountains of Samaria on the south. Beyond the Nazareth range are the plains of Galilee. The background is filled up with the mighty mass of Lebanon, whole snowy summits confine the view which otherwise would extend into Syria.

Tabor has frequently been occupied as a military post. Its commanding position in the plain of Esdraelon: its steep acclivities; and the facility with which its summit may be enclosed and fortified, have recommended it to warriors of every age. In the early times of Israel we read that "Barak went down from Tabor with ten thousand men after him," to fight with Sisera whose iron chariots were gathered together on the plain. In the last struggles of the Jewish nation, it became a post of some importance; Josephus, then governor of Galilee, fortified it with a wall, which he drew all round its summit, and within which, he and the garrison under his command defied the Roman armies, till at last a scarcity of water, occasioned by the excessive heats, obliged them to surrender. Three centuries after, the Empress Helena covered it with churches, in honour of an event commonly supposed, then as now, to have taken place upon its summit—the transfiguration.[1] In the twelfth century it was taken by the Saracens, who demolished its churches and convents, and slaughtered the monks whom they found residing on it. Its buildings, after having been successively restored and destroyed, have for many ages lien in ruins. At this day, "a thick wall constructed with large stones may be traced quite round the summit, close to the edge of the precipice: on several

[1] See note B at the end of the volume.

parts of it are the remains of bastions."[1] There is no doubt that these are the ruins of the wall which Josephus constructed. Here too is shown a grotto under ground, containing three altars, in allusion to the three tabernacles which Peter proposed to erect. Every year on the anniversary of the transfiguration, the monks of Nazareth ascend the mountain in solemn procession, and celebrate mass on these altars: they are accompanied by the whole Christian population of the town: tents are raised on the summit of Tabor, and the night is passed in riotous mirth.

A spectator on the top of Tabor is in the most favourable circumstances for forming a correct judgment of the position and geographical arrangement of the hills of the little Hermon, and Gilboa. This part of the country has been very loosely described by travellers, and certainly very inaccurately represented on the maps. Stephens speaks in such a way of the hills of Gilboa as would lead us to suppose that they lay across the plain,[2] and such is the position commonly given to them in maps: while the little Hermon is placed almost on the banks of the Jordan. The most intelligent account of the site and arrangement of these mountains, we conceive, is that which has been given by professor Robinson and Elliot;[3] and a comparison of their accounts has led us to the conclusion that the hills of Hermon and Gilboa are merely advanced ranges of the mountains of Samaria. Looking from the top of Tabor, they are seen almost due south, running in lines parallel to each other,

[1] Burckhardt, p. 334. [2] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 318.
[3] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 365; Amer. Bib. Rep., Ser. ii, vol. i, p. 429.

and to the range of Samaria. First is the range of Hermon; next come the hills of Gilboa, divided from the former by a valley of about six miles in breadth, and backing the whole is the Samaritan chain. On the east, the hills now under our notice run nearly as far as the Jordan, on the west they extend a very little way beyond the site of Tabor.

HERMON is rather low, but very fruitful; it abounds in pastures, which are watered every night by copious dews: "we were sufficiently instructed by experience," says Maundrell, who thought, erroneously as we conceive, that this is the mountain to which David refers, "what the holy Psalmist means by the dew of Hermon, our tents being as wet with it as if it had rained all night."[1] The range immediately behind—Gilboa, still called by the natives the Djebel Gilbo, has a higher elevation, but its aspect is more stern and desolate. The summits of the mountains of this range are lofty and peaked, their sides are bare, or covered only with a little withered grass, and a few stunted shrubs: they look as if they had not borne bloom or verdure since the fatal day on which the "beauty of Israel" was slain upon their "high places." In their present state we may be able perhaps to recognise the effects of the inspired bard's malediction: "ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew; neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings."[2]

We shall now descend, and go westward along the plain. If, after we have gone a short distance from Tabor, we turn and take another look at it, we may be fortunate enough to find it in the same

[1] Maundrell, pp. 95, 96. [2] 2 Samuel, i, 21.

position in which Stephens saw it—disencumbered from the surrounding mountains, and its beautiful outline strongly relieved against the sky: when seen in such circumstances the majesty of its appearance makes a deep and lasting impression upon the mind of the traveller. "Winding along the valley, an accidental turn brought the mountain again full before me, alone, and strongly defined against the sky: the figure of a man could have been seen standing on the top as on a pedestal. I know not whether, in the splendid effort of Raphael that now adorns the Vatican, he had any idea of this particular mountain; but I remember that, looking back upon it at this time, it struck me that it was exactly the scene which the daring genius of the painter might have selected for the transfiguration of the Son of God."[1]

The Kishon guides us along the plain, and leads us to the foot of Carmel. CARMEL is not a single mountain, but a range of hills which branch off, as we have already indicated, from the central chain of Judea: and running in a north-west direction, terminate on the shore, where they form a bold headland, "the only great promontory on the low coast of Palestine."[2] The length of this range is about twenty miles. Its summit, overlooking the dark blue waters of the Mediterranean, affords a prospect of the coast, south as far as Cesarea, and north to Lebanon, while at its bottom is the noble bay of Acre, with the town itself "dwindled to a speck." The range of Carmel enjoys at all times a clear and healthful atmosphere, even when the interior of the country is obscured with fogs. Its physical aspect varies,

[1] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 19 [2] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 345.

as may easily be supposed, at different points in its course: speaking generally, it has greatly declined from its ancient "excellency;" still, its fine climate, rich verdure, and flourishing woods, are such as may well justify the high terms in which the Hebrew poets were wont to speak of it. In former times it was the "habitation of shepherds" who were attracted thither by the excellency of its pastures: these no longer exist: but certainly Carmel is not in that withered and barren state in which many writers would represent it: the olive still flourishes at its foot; higher up the pine and oak are found growing, its clefts and valleys are watered by mountain torrents, its slopes are covered with grass and herbs, while the silence is agreeably broken by the warbling of innumerable birds in its thickets. Many travellers have visited it, but the finest description of this celebrated hill is by old Sandys: "Mount Carmel stretcheth from east to west; and hath his uttermost basis washed with the sea: steepest toward the north, and of different altitude: rich in olives and vines when husbanded; and abounding with several sorts of fruits and herbs, both medicinable and fragrant, though now much overgrown with woods of sweet savour."[1]

On the summit of Carmel, amid the beauty and stillness of the surrounding region our thoughts carry us back to other days and to far different scenes. On this very spot once assembled a dark crowd of idolatrous priests—the worshippers of Baal: pre-eminent amongst the throng, we behold two individuals of strongly marked, though obviously of very different character. The irresolute gait, and changing counten-

[1] Sandys, p. 203.

ance of the one leave us at no loss: this is Ahab, the monarch who halted between two opinions. But far different, the bold bearing, and magnanimous look of him whom we behold singly braving the scowl of a thousand angry faces,—this is the man who was "very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts." The fires that blazed on that memorable day have long since been quenched: the assembly has passed away: and all is now silent and solitary on the top of Carmel, but the great features of nature around are unchanged. On the west rolls the ocean, out of which the prophet's servant, on his seventh visit to the highest point, saw the little cloud arise, about the bigness of "a man's hand," and behind the mountain, stretching far to the south-east, is the noble plain through which, when the storm rose and blackened in the west, Elijah, girding up his loins, "ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel."

The spot where the memorable transaction to which we have alluded took place, is marked at this day by the ruins of a monastery: the sides of the mountain are thickly covered with the remains of convents, chapels, and gardens, occupied in former ages by the Carmelite friars; an order which rose in the deserts of Syria in the end of the twelfth century. The monks who live on it at present have removed from the top, and inhabit a handsome convent about half way down the hill; they are distinguished rather for their hospitality, than for any of the virtues peculiar to the prophets, whose successors they profess to be. The cave in which it is said Elijah lived, and which is still shown on the mountain, was long after his time converted into a heathen shrine; here

responses were given by the god Carmelus. Among others, as Suetonius relates, the emperor Vespasian came to consult the Oracle, and received the assurance that whatever he undertook should prosper.

With regard to this mountain, we have only further to remark, that its most barren part is the rocky head which fronts the ocean; this may be called the top of Carmel, seeing it is the highest point in the whole chain. To use the words of a traveller, it is in "a withered state." [1] The curse of Amos appears still to rest upon it; "the top of Carmel shall wither."

Leaving Carmel; and passing without notice, in the meantime, the beautifully wooded hills of Samaria, we shall enter the more mountainous regions of Judea. The loftiest of the Judean hills is that which bears the name of QUARANTANIA. It is seen towering pre-eminent among the dark mountains which bound the valley of the Jordan on the west; rising a little north of the road which leads from Jerusalem to Jericho. It has no characters of beauty to arrest the eye of the traveller—having neither verdure, nor woods, nor streams. Steep, naked, and lofty, [2] it rises in the midst of a savage and gloomy wilderness; and invites attention chiefly from the fact of having enjoyed from time immemorial the reputation of being the "exceeding high mountain," where Christ was tempted of the Devil, and from which he was shown "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." The ascent is so difficult and dangerous that few travellers have had the courage to attempt it, and of those who have done so,

[1] Wilson, p. 248. [2] Hasselquist, p. 128.

few have succeeded in reaching the top. The narrow and winding path leads along the edge of dizzy precipices, while the gulph which yawns below threatens certain destruction to the traveller should he have the misfortune to lose his footing.[1] In the sides of the mountain are several holes and caves which in former ages were inhabited by hermits; and certainly it would be difficult to find any where a place more entirely suited to the genius of the misanthrope or recluse. These grottos are sometimes taken possession of by the Arabs, who, knowing that the mountain is an object of curiosity to the pilgrim, oblige him to pay for permission to ascend. Two hundred dollars were demanded from Maundrell for leave to go up the mountain, "so we departed," says he, "not a little glad to have so good an excuse for not climbing so dangerous a precipice."[2] The prospect from the top commands the hills of Gilead, the countries of Ammon and Moab, the whole of the Dead sea, and immediately beneath, the valley and stream of the Jordan. The aspect of the region appears to have differed little in the time of our Saviour, from its appearance at this day: a mountainous and gloomy wilderness extending from a point considerably north of Jericho to the bottom of the Dead sea; confined, however, to the mountains, and not extending into the fertile vale of the Jordan beneath. The narrative of Matthew would lead us to infer that the scene of the fasting and temptation was somewhere in this solitude; for we are told, that immediately on being baptized in the Jordan,—and his baptism appears to have taken place

[1] Mariti, vol. 2, pp. 327, 328. [2] Maundrell, p. 131.

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nearly opposite Jericho,—he went up into the wilderness to be tempted. The gloomy and terrific features of the scenery around the mountain of Quarantania realize all that the mind can picture to itself of such a spot—a place where the spirit of darkness might walk, and where the melancholy power of the scenery might unite with the force of the temptation in subduing the mind. "A most miserable dry barren place it is," says Maundrell, "consisting of high rocky mountains, so torn and disordered, as if the earth had here suffered some great convulsion, in which its very bowels had been turned outwards." [1]

One other mountain only shall we mention before we close this chapter—the Mount of Olives. In point of grandeur and beauty this hill is inferior to several of those we have already described, but it surpasses them all in respect of the great events and solemn recollections with which it is associated. It stands on the east of Jerusalem, from which it is divided by the narrow valley of Jehosaphat. It is in fact composed of three hills, whose summits range from north to south; the highest top is the middle which rises from the garden of Gethsemane, [2] and is crowned with a beautiful little temple of marble of an octagonal form, erected, as tradition says, over the spot which was last touched by the foot of the Saviour. The present character and aspect of this mountain is thus described by Sandys, "pleasantly rich when husbanded, and now upbraiding the barbarous with his neglected pregnancy." [3] Its sides look bare and parched; the rocks at its bottom are

1 Maundrell, p. 130, see note C. 2 Stephens, vol. ii, p. 212.
3 Sandys, p. 199.

grey with age: the olive appears to be indigenous to its soil, and after ages of neglect and desolation, its sides are still dotted with a few specimens of this hardy and long-lived tree. Over one of its lower summits winds a narrow path, the same it is probable which was traversed by David when "he went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went bare-foot."[1] About two-thirds up the mountain is still shown the spot whence the Saviour, "beholding the city, wept over it," and where he pronounced the prophecy of its fall: from this point Jerusalem appears below the spectator spread out like a map. At the foot of Olivet still murmurs the Kedron, as on that awful night when the Saviour crossed it to hide the exceeding sorrow of his soul beneath the deep shade of the olives of Gethsemane.

Let the traveller ascend the top of Mount Olivet, and look from thence; he gazes on scenes than which the world contains none more celebrated. Below him is the daughter of Zion still seated amidst those hills and valleys and streams which encompassed her of old; bereft of all beauty save of that nameless glory which they borrow from the past—a glory which the decorations of art cannot give, nor the destructive rage of barbarism take away. On such a spot the mind becomes utterly oblivious to the events of the present hour, and can think only of the men and the scenes over which two thousand years have now rolled. We look down on the silent city, on the forms which are seen in its streets, on the bare and melancholy hills around, and we ask ourselves with the poet, if these be indeed

[1] 2 Samuel, xv, 30.

——— The towers that gleamed on high
So saintly in the morning sky,
Where power and worth and wisdom dwelt,
Where David sang and Samuel knelt.

It would require a long history to recount the varied scenes of grandeur and misery over which this mount has looked. It saw the infant Jerusalem rise under the sway of Melchizedec, attain its glory under that of David and Solomon, and sink in ashes beneath the dark wings of the Roman Eagle. It soon beheld another city, inheriting the name and the evil fortunes, but nothing of the splendour of its illustrious predecessor, rise on the same site, to be scourged by turns by war and famine and pestilence. How often has it seen the heights around glitter with the arms of invading foes—the Persian, the Saracen, the Christian Crusader, and the Turk: hosts mustering where prophets trod, and its valleys resounding the war-cry of the prophet. It now beholds a servile and alien race living in "the city where David dwelt," and an idolatrous shrine proudly seated on the mount where the Hebrew fathers worshipped. Amid all the changes which Jerusalem has undergone, Mount Olivet has watched faithfully beside it. When the city was in its splendour, Olivet too was gay with gardens and olives. But now that the city is desolate, the mountain wears a covering of sackcloth, and stands there to mourn when dead the city it loved to adorn and defend when living.

Leaving Jerusalem we shall pass south and examine the mountainous region in the neighbourhood of the Dead sea. Viewed from the mount of Olives this sea appears almost immediately beneath the spec-

tator, but when he begins his journey towards it, he finds the way long and tedious.

The general name of the Wilderness of Ziph belongs to the region on the west of the Dead sea. In the times of the ancient Hebrews it appears to have been devoted almost entirely to pasturage, though it contained several considerable towns, whose remains are still visible. Lands used only for the feeding of flocks were termed a wilderness by the Jews, however rich the pastures of such districts. The general aspect of the region at present is gloomy and sterile beyond description. All the terraces of the mountains are broken down, the soil is washed away, and nothing meets the eye but naked rocks, which nourish neither shrubs nor trees, but only tufts of long grass. Yet Pliny informs us that this district was rich anciently in palm-trees, and Josephus says it produced the opo-balsamum.[1] At present there are a few valleys in this district, watered by the Kedron on its way to the Dead sea, and at least one extensive plain, the same on which Nabal fed his flocks of old, which produce excellent pasturage.[2] The ruins of the towns of Ziph, Carmel, and Maon are ranged along the east side of this plain, at short distances from one another, lying east and south of Hebron.[3] The plain is surrounded by low mountains, and affords fine tillage and pasturage. "We read here,"

1 Pliny. lib. v, cap. 17; Mariti. vol. iii, p. 86.

2 This Carmel is commonly confounded with the mountain of that name on the coast near Acre: a mistake the more surprising since we are told that David and his men were at that time dwelling in the wilderness of Ziph.

3 No map that we have seen represents the position of these towns with any degree of accuracy. The map of Cellarius is far wrong here, and modern maps nearly as much so,

says Dr. Robinson, "the story of David and Nabal, and were deeply struck with the truth of the biblical descriptions of manners and customs almost literally and identically the same as they exist at the present day."[1]

Due east from Carmel, on the western shore of the Dead sea, is Ain Jiddi, the ancient En-gedi. The route thither is almost a continued descent from the high plain of Carmel, and is very toilsome, being performed through mountains, and often by steep and difficult passes. At last we arrive on the edge of the precipitous cliff which overhangs En-gedi, and from a height of at least fifteen hundred feet we look down on the Dead sea, which fills the vast chasm below. We descend by a pass more steep and rugged, according to Robinson, than any to be found among the Alps, and arrive on a narrow terrace, where a warm fountain of beautifully transparent water bursts forth. We are still four hundred feet above the level of the shore. On our right are the ruins of En-gedi: "the whole descent" from this point, says Robinson, "was apparently once terraced for gardens." We know that in the time of Solomon this region abounded in hanging gardens, for we find the monarch enriching his "Song" with an allusion to their fruits. "My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi."[2] "The whole slope," says Robinson, "is still covered with trees and shrubs of a more southern clime. Nothing is needed but tillage to render this a most prolific spot. The soil is rich, the heat great, and water abundant."[3]

[1] Amer. Bib. Rep. Series ii, vol. i, p. 418.
[2] Song, i, 14. [3] Amer. Bib. Rep. Series ii, vol. i, pp. 418, 419.

Returning to Jerusalem by a route a little west of north we pass the monastery of Santa Saba—a heavy pile, seated in the very heart of the mountainous country, on the precipitous banks of the Kedron, and forming one of the dreariest dwellings on the face of the earth.[1] From the tower of the monastery nothing is seen but the wildest scenery on all sides, the waters of the Dead sea, and the hills of the wilderness of Ziph, on which David was so long pursued by Saul. The precipices around are full of caves which are said to have afforded a retreat to the Christians in some of the early persecutions. In a dark vaulted chamber below are several thousand skulls, said to have belonged to those who were slaughtered at the period referred to. The neighbourhood abounds with beasts of prey, foxes, jackalls, and some travellers say tigers. They often assemble round the walls of the convent, and are fed by the monks, who divide their charity between them and the Arabs.[2]

It so happens that the mountains we have described are those which are distinguished for their fertility and beauty. Very different at this day is the aspect of the mountains of Palestine generally. The long chain which passes from Samaria south to the borders of Edom is for the most part completely barren. Here a terrace may be discovered on its sides: there it may enclose a valley of great fer-

1 Muriti, vol. iii, p. 59.

2 About thirty monks live in this desolate place. A tradition exists amongst them that St. Saba the founder promised that the convent should exist so long as the world stood. A few years ago the Arabs became very troublesome and threatened to burn the monastery: the poor Monks were much distressed with the fear that the world was at an end.

tility; but its general character is that of utter desolation. The same may be affirmed of the mountains which border on the lake of Tiberias, and run along the whole plain of the Jordan on the west, and also of the hills of Nazareth, which stretch across the country, and bound the plain of Esdraelon on the north. The same is true of the mountains of upper Galilee: and with regard to Lebanon, a great part of this vast chain is composed of naked rocks and snows. And as Palestine is a hilly country, it follows, seeing this is the state of its mountains, that a great part of the Land of Promise at this day is absolutely naked—producing nothing. It is not by attending to the state of a particular mountain, but by taking the character of the whole into view, that we will feel how truly the curse denounced against the mountains of Israel has been fulfilled. "Except in the wilderness of Sinai, and among the wastes of Idumea," says Stephens, "I never travelled so dreary a road as in going down to Jericho." [1] "We saw the country under circumstances the most favourable," says Elliot of the same route, "inasmuch as more rain had fallen during the winter and spring than had been known for many years, and the heats of summer had not yet set in; still where nature has been most kind, the limestone rock produces nothing but the dry tamarisk and one or two similar shrubs; but, farther from Jerusalem, even these vanish; the pilgrim descends hill after hill, each more barren than the last, and thus winds his way for two or three hours down rugged and naked rocks, over a track scarcely passable and hemmed in on all sides by hills

1 Stephens, vol. ii, p. 251.

whose look is death."[1] "In attempting to describe the scenes which we had yesterday beheld," says Bertou of the tract bordering on the south-west shore of the Dead sea, "I feel the utter inadequacy of words to express my feelings. I had wandered through the Alps, the Pyrenees, and many other mountains—I had seen countries blasted by the curse of the Almighty, the plains of Moab, and the land of Ammon—but had seen nothing to compare with the mountains of Zoarah and Esdum. Here is desolation on the grandest scale, and beyond what the imagination of man could conceive; it must be seen—to describe it is impossible. In this striking and solemn waste, where Nature is alike destitute of vegetation and of inhabitants, man appears but an atom; —all around is enveloped in the silence of death,—not a bird, not even an insect is seen! The regular step of our camels returned a dull sound, as if the earth were hallowed beneath our feet: the monotonous chant of the camel-driver accompanied at times the step of this inhabitant of the desert, but was suddenly stopped, as if he feared to awaken Nature. The sun concealed itself by thick clouds, and seemed unwilling to shine upon the land cursed by the Almighty."[2] *For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burnt up, so that none can pass through them; neither can man hear the voice of the cattle, both the fowl of the heavens, and the beast are fled, they are gone.*[3] *The mountains of Israel shall be desolate.*[4]

[1] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 466.
[2] Geographical Journal, vol. ix, part ii.
[3] Jeremiah, ix, 10.
[4] Ezekiel, xxxiii, 28.

CHAPTER V.

PLAINS AND VALLEYS SOUTH OF JERUSALEM.

Outline of Journey over the Holy Land—Interest attaching to such a progress—Leave El Arish the southern boundary—Roman road from Red sea to Jerusalem—Ruins of an ancient city—Enter on a rich pastoral district—Plain of Beersheba—Ruins of the ancient town—Patriarchal recollections—Start for Hebron—Enter hill-country of Judah—Plain of Mamre—Vineyards—Cave of Macphelah—Tombs of patriarchs—Road to Hebron—Pools of Solomon—Field of the shepherds—Bethlehem—Aspect of the country north to Jerusalem—Objects of interest by the way—Desolate appearance of Jerusalem, and of the country around—Valley of Gihon—Valley of Hinnom—Mount Zion—Field of Blood—Valley of Jehosaphat—Ancient and modern burial-place of the Jews—Tomb of Zecharias—Of James—Of Absalom—Of Jehosaphat—Remarks on the design of these monuments, and the period of their erection—Garden of Gethsemane—Desolate aspect of the vale—Road to Bethany—Aspect of the village—Supposed tomb of Lazarus—Return to Jerusalem—Sepulchres of kings—Magnificence of these tombs—Maundrell's account of them—Question whether these subterranean chambers were really the sepulchres of the Kings of Judah—Reflections.

We purpose to divide our journey over the Land of Promise into four stages. Our first stage shall reach from the southern border of the country north to Jerusalem;—a route which will allow us to visit the plain of Beersheba, where in other days the patri-

archs fed their flocks; and the fields around Bethlehem, the native city of David, and of David's Lord. The second stage will reach from Jerusalem to Joppa, traversing the western mountains of Judah, and the plain of Sharon, on the border of the "Great sea." Our third journey will lead us from Jerusalem to the foot of Lebanon, by the way of Shechem, and the plain of Esdraelon. In our fourth and last we shall descend the Jordan, visiting the lakes of Merom and Tiberias, the plain of Jericho, and finally the Dead sea. In our progress we shall take the liberty at times of leaving the straight line of our course, for the purpose of visiting the lateral plains and valleys; but having done so, we shall immediately return to the point from which we diverged, and pursue our journey.

In such a progress it is impossible to forget that we are in a land of prophets. The mind naturally reverts to the scenes of which this part of the world was the theatre in early times: and we endeavour to connect the existing features of the landscape with the events with which our memories were earliest stored, and the men with whose lives and characters the Bible has rendered us familiar. It is the usual custom with those who undertake this journey, to occupy their time chiefly in examining those edifices, either Catholic or Mohammedan, which superstition has erected for the purpose of commemorating the scene of memorable events. Our journey has been undertaken for no purpose of this sort. We have come here to examine the country, to record its great features, and not to gaze and wonder at the gorgeous and fantastic piles with which man has laboured to adorn

as some believe, to desecrate as we think this illustrious land. These erections we shall pass almost without notice. Nor shall we spend our time in the unprofitable labour of seeking to determine the exact spot where certain transactions occurred: on such occasions we shall be satisfied to think, that we are near the place to which some former event has given a lasting interest—the fields where Abraham fed his flocks, or where He whose day Abraham saw afar off preached the gospel of his kingdom, and performed his miracles of mercy. Such as these hills and valleys appear to us, so must they have appeared to them; only then the "curse" had not fallen upon them, and they were more beautiful.

Crossing El Arish, the southern boundary of the Holy Land, we begin our journey in a north-east direction, taking the ancient Roman road which led from Aïla on the Red sea to Hebron and Jerusalem. Our way lies for sometime through a country covered, for the most part, with drifting sands, with here and there a little heath and low brush-wood.[1] If we enquire for the towns which are known to have existed anciently on this highway, we find that of many of them no traces remain; others exist but in a state of complete ruin. Journeying onwards for sometime we enter a valley running off to the north. On the height which bounds the valley on the west are the remains of a city, not less than two miles in circuit. The name of this city is unknown, but it appears to have been a place of considerable importance. The ruins of houses, which appear to have been mostly built of hewn stone, public edifices and cisterns, all lie together in a state of indescribable confusion,

[1] Joliffe, vol. i, p. 233.

and "it would seem," says Dr. Robinson, who discovered this site, "as if the city had been suddenly overthrown by some tremendous earthquake."[1]

The valley (Wady Ruheibeh) in which these ruins are situated opens out on the north into a fine plain covered with grass and bushes. Here the "carol of the lark" announces that we have left the desert behind, and are approaching a more fertile region. On this plain we discover extensive remains of another city, the ancient Elusa. Crossing an elevated plateau, we descend upon an open rolling country, more fertile than the former plain, and covered in some parts with wheat and barley. This is the plain of Beersheba, so frequently mentioned in the history of the patriarchs, and the pastoral richness of the district sufficiently accounts for their great partiality to it. Here Isaac pitched his tent, and he "builded an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord:"[2] while his flocks roamed over the swelling hills around: and here the deadly feud grew up between the twin brothers, which divided so long the nations of Israel and Edom. About two years ago,[3] Professor Robinson was so fortunate as to discover on this plain the remains of the ancient town of Beersheba, still bearing the Arabic name of Bir Seba. Near the water course of the plain are two circular wells of excellent water, surrounded by drink-

[1] "The Arabic name," says Robinson, "suggests the Rehoboth of Scripture, the name of one of Isaac's wells (Gen. xxvi, 22); but the other circumstances do not correspond."—Amer. Bib. Rep., Series ii, vol. i, p. 308. [2] Genesis, xxvi, 25.

[3] April 12th, 1838. A year before, Lindsay passing this way, a little to the east of Robinson's route, says, "I could hear nothing of Beersheba."—Vol. ii, p. 50. Robinson was more fortunate.

ing-troughs of stone, such as the patriarchs might have used for watering their flocks. On the north of the wells are low hills strewed over with the ruins of former habitations, extending over a space half a mile long by a quarter of a mile broad. "Here then," says Dr. Robinson, "is the place where Abraham and Isaac and Jacob often lived! Here Samuel made his sons judges; and from here Elijah wandered out into the southern desert, and sat down under the rethem, or shrub of broom, just as our Arabs sat down under it every day and every night!"[1]

Starting for Hebron, a distance of thirty miles, we soon leave the plain of Beersheba, with all its patriarchal recollections behind, and enter the hill country of Judah. Our course is still north-east by east. The mountains here are of limestone, and the white rock every where peering through the soil gives a blighted and desolate aspect to the region, yet when it is more closely examined, it is found to abound with valleys full of corn and vines: the vineyards here yielding the largest clusters in all Palestine. Still advancing, the cultivation increases, and the rounded hills of Hebron (for we are now near that city) are clothed to the top with bushes of the prickly oak—a beautiful shrub.[2] Climbing a rocky mountain which lies directly in our way,[3] we descend into a long, broad, and winding valley, filled with grain, vines, and olive trees.[4] This is the plain of Mamre! Here Abraham dwelt; and here he entertained the "three men," who appeared to him as "he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day."[5] The plain

[1] Amer. Bib. Rep. Series ii, vol. i, pp. 308, 309.
[2] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 50. [3] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 140.
[4] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 51. [5] Gen. xviii, 1.

is bounded on all sides and shut in by stony mountains; and there can be no doubt that it was on the summit of one of the mountains which border the valley that the memorable intercession of the patriarch for Sodom took place. That the plain of the Jordan and its devoted cities were in the view of Abraham while he was interceding is evident from the transactions of the following morning, "And Abraham gat up early in the morning, to the place where he stood before the Lord, and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah," (situated east by south from where he was standing,) "and towards all the land of the plain, and behold and lo the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace."[1] Pursuing our way along this celebrated valley, and turning a point of the mountain to the left, we come full in view of the little town of Hebron.[2] We behold it pleasantly situated at the extremity of the plain, on the slope of a hill:[3] the whole arrangement of the country verifying the scriptural record "the plain of Mamre which is before Hebron." The "pool" over which David hung up the murderers of Ishbosheth still remains, and fixes the site of the ancient city. The large white mosque, with its two minarets, which is seen rising at the west end of the town marks the spot where the ashes of the patriarchs repose—the father of the faithful, the child of promise, and the wrestler with God. This building stands in what is believed to be the field of Macphelah; and there is little reason to doubt the identity of the spot.

[1] Genesis, xix, 27, 28.

[2] The Arabs still call it El Khalel, The Friend. Probably from the name given to Abraham, "the friend of God."

[3] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 140.

The best account of the interior of the mosque which covers the supposed graves, and into which it is rare indeed that any Christian or Jew can obtain admission, has been given by Benjamin of Tudela, who visited the place in the end of the thirteenth century. Passing through the iron gate, the visitor descends into a first and second cave, and then into a third; where he is shown six tombs, ranged in two rows, on opposite sides, being those of the three patriarchs and their wives. A lamp burns continually in the cave, and according to Ali Bey, whose account in other respects disagrees with that of others, the graves are covered with "rich carpets of green silk, magnificently embroidered with gold; those of their wives are red, embroidered in like manner. The sultans of Constantinople furnish these carpets, which are renewed from time to time, I counted nine, one over the other, upon the sepulchre of Abraham."[1] "How loud," says Elliot, "will the song of praise here sound when human dust shall seek its kindred atoms ..... surely in that day, few valleys will be so joyous as the 'vale of Eschol,' few caves so honoured as the 'cave of Macphelah.'"[2] [3]

Leaving this region, which teems with the recollection of events which took place here in the morning of the world, we begin our journey to Bethlehem.

[1] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 497. [2] Ibid. vol. ii, p. 499.

[3] For an interesting note on "the cave of the field of Macphelah,"—see Pictorial Bible, Gen. xxiii. The supposition is becoming common that the 'plain of Mamre' is the same with the 'valley of Eschol,' from which the spies took the cluster of grapes; this supposition rests chiefly on the fertile character of the plain. The country, for a short distance on the north is as rich in vines as it is on the south of the town. "For miles," says Paxton, "we had nothing on either side of the road but a succession of vineyards loaded with the most delicious grapes."—Letters from Palestine, p. 139.

The road, which is simply a mule-path, leads over a succession of barren hills; occasionally descending into a cultivated valley:[1] the tract, says Elliot "is wild as nature's wildest productions," and swarms with Bedouin banditti.[2] We meet with nothing worthy of particular notice, till we come to the pools of Solomon, a distance of three hours from Hebron, and within an hour and a quarter of Bethlehem. This is very probably the site where the monarch of Israel made him "gardens and orchards and pools of water," and so far as is known, these pools are all that remain of the mighty works of the wise king. In point of magnificence they are not unworthy of Solomon. Their shape is quadrangular, and the length of the smallest is from four to five hundred feet. They are placed in a small valley, and so disposed that the waters of the one may fall into those of the other, while from the third and lower runs an aqueduct, in the direction of Jerusalem, which is supposed to have conveyed, in ancient times, the water of these pools to the capital, and the cisterns in the temple. The spring which supplies them issues from a rocky cave, cut in the mountain which bounds the valley. Its waters, which never fail, are cool and pleasant. Below the small valley in which the pools are situated is another and larger valley, enclosed on all sides, save the east, by a chain of mountains. This is the supposed site of the pleasure gardens of the monarch. Maundrell objects to the ground as rocky, and says, that Solomon in the choice of such a spot did not display his usual wisdom. Mariti and Hasselquist—the latter of whom

[1] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 167. [2] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 494.

is no mean authority, pronounce the valley well adapted for royal gardens. The soil in the bottom is fertile, and produces at this day crops of wheat, olives, and vines; while the slopes around are clothed with numerous wild flowers, such as thyme and anemones, which grow here naturally, and at all seasons. To a spectator in the middle of the plain, the declivities look like so many curtains, designed by nature to enclose the spot.[1] To this fountain in the rock, which the monarch was enabled to open and shut at his pleasure, and the gardens in the neighbourhood, which were watered by this spring, it is thought Solomon alludes in these words, "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed."[2]

Leaving these celebrated pools, we travel for some time through a hollow; the hills which border it appear to be given up to rocks and stones. Proceeding a short way, the narrow valley spreads out into a plain of from twenty to fifty yards wide, crossed with walls, and arranged into gardens. This small cultivated spot has a pleasing effect occurring as it does in the midst of a rocky wilderness.[3] We leave it, and soon after enter an extensive plain of a rich pastoral character. This plain is in the immediate neighbourhood of Bethlehem, and here the "son of Jesse" must often have led forth his father's flocks to feed. This site is interesting also from the likelihood that it is the same with that in which the shepherds were watching their flocks when the angel announced to

[1] Maundrell, pp. 143—147; Hasselquist, pp. 145, 146; Mariti, vol. ii, pp. 429—434; Joliffe, vol. i, pp. 97, 98; Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 53; Stephens, vol. ii, pp. 157, 168.

[2] Song, iv, 12. [3] Paxton's Letters, p. 145.

them the birth of the Saviour. "The scene," says Stephens, "was as pastoral as it had been eighteen hundred years before; the sun was going down, the shepherds were gathering their flocks together, and one could almost imagine that, with the approach of evening, they were preparing to receive another visitor from on high."[1]

A short journey to the north, brings us in sight of Bethlehem: situated on the slope of a mountain, which runs from east to west;[2] having no greater claim to architectural magnificence than it had in the days of the prophet when it is spoken of as "little among the thousands of Judah."[3] Its edifices are constructed without order or beauty, and present to the eye of the traveller a "confused and irregular pile of white buildings."[4] We pass it at present, as we shall notice it more particularly afterwards.

The road to Jerusalem—for we have now commenced our journey towards that fallen capital of a fallen people, winds, at first, between olive and fig gardens, but these soon give place to a succession of stony hills."[5] The first object of attraction on the way is the tomb of Rachel—distant about forty minutes from Bethlehem. It is a square building, surmounted by a dome, and white-washed after the manner of the Turks. The building is obviously modern, but the site is probably the true one. At all events, it is clear, from the Scriptural description, that the spot where the "mother of Israel" died and was buried is near to this monument. "And they

[1] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 174. [2] Mariti, vol. ii, p. 408.
[3] Micah, v, 7. [4] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 169.
[5] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 57.

journeyed from Bethel, and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day."[1] It is possible that a succession of monuments replaced the original one, down to the Turkish building which now occupies the site. The road from Bethlehem to Jerusalem is thickly set with holy places. These are unworthy of belief; and scarcely worthy of notice. A little beyond the tomb of Rachel, is shown an impression in the rock, produced, it is said, by the body of Elijah, who slept here, as he fled from Jezebel. "Whatever it be," says Hasselquist, "the place is convenient to rest in."[2] A little farther on is a fountain, where the guiding star shone forth a second time to the "wise men of the east." Passing the "cistern of the star," the traveller is next shown the houses of the aged Simeon, and the prophet Habakkuk. It will not surprise the reader to be told that both buildings are now in ruins. Beyond these, and nearer Jerusalem, is a Terebinth tree, of marvellous age, seeing it is the same, under which the virgin rested, as she carried the infant Saviour to be presented in the temple.[3] The country traversed by the traveller between the cities of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, is for the most part uncultivated, and far inferior in point of fertility to the district around Hebron. The road lies, for great part of the way, though a prolonged plain,

[1] Genesis, xxxv, 16, 19, 20. [2] Hasselquist, p. 143.

[3] This tree has been destroyed since the days of Sandys. Its site at this day is occupied by an olive.

bounded on either hand by low, round, and barren mountains. In all probability this is the valley of Rephaim,[1] the scene where David vanquished the Philistines, who then held possession of Bethlehem.[2] Mariti speaks of the fields as parched, and wearing a frightful appearance from the aspect of the neighbouring mountains.[3] Sandys says, "we passed through a country, hilly and stony: yet not utterly forsaken of the vine, though only planted by Christians."[4] About half way between the two cities the land has a more fertile appearance: crops of grain are seen in the valleys, and a few olives and vines are scattered over the surrounding mountains. But while such is the character of the middle portion of the route, the country at both ends of the line is dreary and desolate beyond description. It looks as if the lightning of the curse, which rent the towers and palaces of the once proud capital of Judea, had spread its consuming energy over the region for leagues around, and left the miserable wrecks of Jerusalem in a dark frame-work of stony valleys and naked mountains. As the traveller in this blighted region looks around, and surveys the desolation which reigns on all sides, he is tempted to exclaim in the words of the poet,

"Are these the plains so blest of old,
Where bloom'd the vine, and shone the fold,
Where milk and honey flow'd around,
And guardian angels clothed the ground;
This, on whose bleak and barren brow
The sun, the dew seems wasted now;

[1] It is believed to be so by the older travellers. The more recent ones confound it with the valley of Gihon, west of Jerusalem, without any good reason. Compare Maundrell, p. 141, with Joliffe, vol. i, p. 90.

[2] 2 Samuel, xxiii, 13.

[3] Mariti, vol. ii, p. 405.

[4] Sandys, p. 176.

Where flitting round her willowy streams
To desert winds the bittern screams?"

Ascending a little eminence on the road, a short way beyond the "fountain of the star," Jerusalem comes suddenly in sight. The traveller who did not expect it is startled by its sudden appearance, and apparent proximity. He can hardly bring himself to believe that the dull town before him, flanked on all sides by heavy walls, and environed by bare and stony hills, is indeed the city of which it was sung "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." "I saw," says Stephens, on whom it burst in this manner, "that it was walled all around, and that it stood alone in an extensive waste of mountains without suburbs, or even a solitary habitation beyond its walls."[1] This city forms the termination of our first stage, and we shall now "walk about" the daughter of Zion and survey her enclosing valleys. Deep ravines[2] encompass Jerusalem on all sides save the north; these form her natural boundaries, and must ever have prevented the limits of the city from being much more extended in any direction save in that we have indicated, where the equality of the ground offered no obstruction to the erection of buildings. The works of art with which these valleys were decorated, when the heights above proudly displayed the palace of Judah's monarchs, and the sanctuary of her God—the groves and gardens which

[1] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 187.

[2] Speaking more properly, Jerusalem is encompassed by only one valley or ravine, which bears different names, as it runs on the west, the south, or the east of the city. On the west it is called the valley of Gihon, on the south the valley of Hinnom, and on the east the valley of Jehosaphat.

royally begirt the "city of the great King"—the fountains which refreshed them, have passed away, and left the scenery around this illustrious city as it existed before the art and the labour of man had adorned and improved it. Still, with all its desolation, the natural features of such a region are deeply interesting.

Arriving on the west of the city, like every traveller who comes from Bethlehem, we find ourselves in the VALLEY OF GIHON. This, in its upper part, is a broad, shallow, barren vale, extending between the city walls and the hill on the west. It is possible, according to Elliot's supposition,[1] that the city covered it in former times; for the nature of the ground would easily admit of this. Here is the pool of Gihon—one of the reservoirs constructed by the early sovereigns of Judah, for the supply of the city. The aqueduct which conveyed its waters into Jerusalem may still be traced. Considerably below this is the lower pool; the same which was built by Hezekiah, who "stopped the upper water-course of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David."[2] This pool is formed by a wall built across the valley; and having no springs of its own, it is filled only when the abundant rains cause the waters of the upper pool to overflow. As the valley descends to the south, it appears to deepen: "the word trench or ditch would convey a more correct idea of its appearance"[3] at this point. Below the second pool, the western and rocky declivity of Gihon begins to be pierced with numerous tombs; these not only extend all the way to the southern

[1] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 424. [2] Chronicles, xxxii, 30.
[3] Robinson, vol. i, p. 105.

angle of the valley, but are continued into that of Hinnom.[1] Those who have examined these sepulchres minutely, say that they much resemble the celebrated tombs at Telmessus.

Following the windings of the ravine, which here bends to the east, and runs along the foot of Mount Zion, we enter the VALLEY OF HINNOM. This vale is deeper and broader than the one we have just left, particularly in the eastern part, where it joins the valley of Jehosaphat. "Its bottom is rock, covered with a thin sprinkling of earth washed down from the higher ground. Both its sides are cut down perpendicularly, as if it had served for a quarry to the ancient city. Its breadth is about fifty yards, and its depth perhaps twenty, measuring from the bottom to the highest part of Mount Zion. Nothing is known of the person who has given his name to the valley. A winter torrent runs through its bed, and falls into the brook Kedron."[2] On the left is MOUNT ZION. This hill, formerly the residence of the ark, and the site of the palace of the kings of Judah, is now in part under cultivation, and, in its usual state, may be seen covered with barley, verifying Micah's prediction, that Zion should be ploughed as a field. The whole of Mount Zion was within the ancient Jerusalem; the walls of the modern city are drawn over its summit, leaving thus the half of it unenclosed. On that part of the hill which is without the walls is a Turkish mosque, standing, as is believed, on the site of the chamber in which Christ celebrated the first supper: in the interior of the mosque is shown the tomb of David. Whether

[1] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 425. [2] Robinson, vol. i, p. 105.

this be his tomb or not, it is possible, that the resting place of the "man according to God's own heart" may be somewhere on this mount: for we are expressly told, that instead of being interred outside the walls, as is usual in oriental cities, "David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David."[1] The city of David was built on Mount Zion.[2]

We have alluded to the present desolate aspect of this valley. In the idolatrous days of Judah, it was shaded with groves and watered with fountains. In the midst of these groves stood the idol Moloch, in whose burning arms the Hebrew mothers were wont to immolate their children; whilst the loud clang of the timbrel and trumpet drowned the cries of the shrieking victim.[3] The good Josiah brake the idol in pieces, cut down the groves; and, for the purpose of defiling the valley, commanded the filth of the city to be thrown into it, together with the dead carcases of animals and malefactors. To prevent the contagion which would infallibly have ensued had such a mass of abominable matter been allowed to lie and putrify, fires were kept perpetually burning in Hinnom; and by an easy metaphor, the Jews came to apply the name Gehenna to that more dreadful place, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." The valley is bounded on the south by the mount of offence, so called, because there Solomon built "an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem."[4] At this day it is termed the "hill of

[1] 1 Kings, ii, 10. [2] See page 141.

[3] The musical instrument employed on these melancholy occasions was termed in Hebrew Toph; hence the valley was called Tophet. [4] 2 Kings, xi, 7.

evil counsel;" because, according to tradition, the "priests, scribes, and pharisees, here took counsel against Jesus, to put him to death."[1] It is a low rocky flat, being the terminating ridge of a high ground, which runs south-west of Jerusalem.[2] On this hill, "mounted a good height,"[3] is Aceldama, or "the field of blood," having been purchased with the price of blood, as a place "to bury strangers in." It is a small plat of ground, about thirty yards in length, and fifteen broad.[4] In the middle of this plat stands a square building, of about twelve yards in height, used as a charnel-house. At present it is open at the top;[5] but formerly it was roofed in, having several apertures, through which dead bodies were admitted. "Through these" (apertures,) says Sandys, "we might see the bottom, all covered with bones, and certaine corses but newly let downe—it being now the sepulchre of the Armenians; a greedy grave, and great enough to devoure the dead of a whole nation. For they say (and I believe it) that the earth thereof within the space of eight-and-forty hours will consume the flesh that is laid thereon."[6] At this day it is used as a burial-place for strangers. "A large chamber excavated in the rock," says Stephens, "is still the charnel-house of the poor and unhonoured dead of Jerusalem."[7] Below "this resting-place of poverty, and perhaps of crime," are numerous tombs hewn in the rock. These sepul-

[1] Luke, xxvii, 2.
[2] Robinson, vol. i, pp. 105, 106.
[3] Sandys, p. 186.
[4] Maundrell, p. 163.
[5] Robinson, vol. i, p. 107.
[6] Sandys, p. 187.—This fabulous quality of the soil of this burial ground has caused it to be carried to a distance, especially to Rome and Pisa, where, says Sandys, "though changing soils, retaineth her vertue."
[7] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 217.

chres—the last abodes of the rich in Jerusalem—are large, ornamented with sculpture, divided into several chambers; and in the time of Sandys they were closed by stone doors, after the ancient custom. Turning to the declivities of Mount Zion opposite, near the point where the valley of Gihon merges in that of Jehosaphat, we are shown the white mulberry-tree, which according to tradition marks the spot where Isaiah was sawed asunder;[1] and higher up is the fountain of Siloa, "which flowed fast by the oracle of God," with the brook still gushing down the sides of Zion, clear and beautiful, and murmuring along the valley.

Descending the vale of Hinnom, we enter that of Jehosaphat, which, "like two conjoyning streams do trent to the south."[2] The VALLEY OF JEHOSAPHAT is a narrow and deep ravine, running from north to south, on the east of the city, and unquestionably the most interesting of all the interesting localities in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. It is overhung on the east by the heights of Olivet, and on the west by the battlements of the city, to which in ancient times were added those of the temple. In the bottom, through a rocky channel, murmurs the Kedron, "which runneth no longer than fed with showers."[3] The caution, so impressively addressed by the poet to the visitor on the celebrated field in Europe, where so much of the rank and valour of Christendom lie cold in death—

> "Stop; for thy tread is on an empire's dust—
> A nation's spoil is sepulchred below,"

[1] It is a fable of the monks that it bears no fruit. We have the authority of Hasselquist, for saying that at least it bears blossoms.—Hasselquist, p. 142. [2] Sandys, p. 188. [3] Ibid.

may, with much more truth and force, be addressed to him who treads the sacred soil of the Valley of Jehosaphat. Beneath the grey sod which covers the face of its steep declivity lie the countless generations of the Hebrew people. To this valley the longing heart of the Israelite turns in the most distant regions of the earth. Far separated from his people during life, he fondly hopes to rejoin them in the grave. Amid all the coldness and scorn of the world, it consoles him to think that he shall sleep at last beside the waters of the Kedron, and beneath the shadow of Mount Zion; and very often is that hope realized. From all parts of the globe—from the snow-covered fields of Russia—from the burning clime of Africa—the descendants of Israel here meet and lie down together, and mingle their dust with the contemporaries of David and Solomon.

The declivities in the middle of the valley are almost literally paved with tombstones; some of which are of the most ancient date; for here the Jew has been accustomed to bury his dead during the past three thousand years. These graves are of the simplest kind, no ornaments being employed to decorate them. The site is marked by a slab of unpolished stone, on which is written, in the Hebrew character, the name and age of the deceased, with the day of his death. The ground is rocky, and no little labour is required to excavate a grave.[1]

This valley derives an interest from other sources. How often has it been traversed by kings and prophets, and watered by the blood of martyrs. To the gardens at the bottom of the mountain, and the si-

[1] Robinson, vol. i, p. 129.

lent and sheltered retreats on its sides, Christ was "wont to resort;" and with the still valley of Jehosaphet between him and the noise and bustle of the city, he here gave way to meditation and prayer. This vale, moreover, contains several monuments worthy of notice, from the distinguished names with which they are connected. Advancing northwards, having the city on our left, and the Mount of Olives on our right, we come first to the tomb of Zacharias.[1] It is a square fabric, twenty feet in height, adorned on each side with four Ionic pilasters, supporting a heavy projecting architrave, above which rises a pyramidal top. The whole mass, with the pilasters and architrave which beautify it, is cut out of the solid rock. "The whole," says Elliot, "is a mixture of the Grecian and Egyptian styles, exhibiting, as has aptly been observed, 'a link between the pyramids and the Parthenon.'"[2] Next to this is the tomb of James. It stands boldly out in the front of the rock, having much the appearance of a small gallery. It is supported at each end by a pilaster, and in the middle by two Doric pillars. Immediately behind the pillars is an entrance into the tomb; the rock within is hewn into several chambers. Near to the tomb of James, on the north, is the sepulchre of Absalom. It is a square mass of sixteen feet, like the tomb of Zacharias, hewn with all its ornaments out of the rock. In the words of Stephens, it "is a single stone, as large as an ordinary two-story house." On each of

[1] Whether of the prophet of that name, or of the person who was slain between the porch and the altar, is not determined.

[2] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 431; Chateaubriand, vol. ii, p. 91.

its four sides, two pilasters and four pillars, of the Doric order, in all twenty-four, support a heavy architrave; above which is a large dome of masonry, surmounted by a top "like a Chinese pagoda." Although hewn out of the mountain, it stands out distinct from it—the rock having been cleared away all round. Before it is a heap of stones daily accumulating; for every passer-by, whether Jew or Christian, accounts it his duty to cast a stone at the pillar, to mark his detestation of the rebellious son. Nor is the Mohammedan less sparing than the Jew in his execrations of Absalom. It scarcely admits of doubt, that this tomb never contained the dust of him for whom it was erected. It is next to certain, that Absalom was buried in the wood where his life and rebellion ended together; for we read—"And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him."[1] This, however, may be the "pillar" which Absalom "reared up to himself" in his lifetime, "in the king's vale." No entrance has ever been discovered into this tomb nor into that of Zacharias. This renders it probable that these monuments were erected as cenotaphs; for however securely closed, for the purpose of preventing the dust within from ever being disturbed, had any aperture existed, it would undoubtedly have been discovered ere this time, after the careful examination to which they have often been subjected. Behind the tomb of Absalom is that of Jehosaphat, "who walked in the ways of the Lord." It consists simply of an excavation in the rock, its entrance forming its only ornament.

[1] 2 Samuel, xviii, 17.

"The interior," says Stephens, "was damp, the water trickling from the walls, and nearly filled with sand and crumbling stone." [1]

Such is the present appearance of these extraordinary monuments. "There is a certain air of grandeur and of sublimity," says Clarke, "in their massy structure, in the boldness of their design, and in the sombre hue prevailing not only over the monuments themselves, but over all the surrounding rocks whence they were hewn, which is lost in the minuteness of engraved representation." [2] That the purpose for which these monuments were erected had some reference to the dead, is, we think, very evident. As to some of them, the chambers they contain clearly show that they were designed as receptacles of dead bodies; but it is extremely problematical whether they were ever meant to contain the dust of those whose names they bear at this day; nor is it possible to determine even the age to which they are to be ascribed. The mixture of Hebrew and Greek architecture, so visible in their construction, has led some to conclude, that the Ionic ornaments at the top of the columns were added long after the date of their erection; and that it is to this the Saviour alludes when he says of the Jews of his own day, that they "*garnished* the sepulchres of the righteous." Dr. Clarke—no mean authority—is of a different opinion. "There is not the slightest reason for this conjecture," says he. "The co-

[1] The authorities consulted for the description of these celebrated tombs, are:—Sandys, pp. 188, 189; Maundrell, p. 165; Robinson, vol. i, pp. 129—132; Stephens, vol. ii, pp. 214, 215; Elliot, vol. ii, pp. 430—433.

[2] Clarke, vol. iv, p. 372.

lumns are of that ancient style and character which yet appear among the works left by Ionian and Dorian colonies, in the remains of their Asiatic cities; particularly at Telmessus, where even the *inscriptions* denote a period in history long anterior to the era when such a modification of these ancient structures might have taken place."[1] Whoever erected these monuments, they appear to have imitated both the Egyptian and Grecian models. The predominating character of the architecture, heavy and sombre, yet possessing something of grandeur, is evidently borrowed from the country of the Pharaohs; whilst the light ornaments, employed to relieve the heaviness of the pile, are obviously the product of Grecian taste. Between these tombs and the banks of the Kedron are the graves we have already described, which contain the collected dust of so many ages and countries. They are part of a vast cemetery, extending along the foot of all the mountains which enclose Jerusalem on the south and east, affording unquestionable proofs of the former existence, in their neighbourhood, of a flourishing and powerful people.

But beyond all question, the most interesting and memorable spot which this celebrated valley contains is the GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE. To this garden an undying interest attaches, as the scene of our Lord's agony. "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered."[2] And here it is, lying on the foot of the Mount of Olives, on the east side of the Kedron, and "occupying the very spot one's eyes would turn

[1] Clarke, vol. iv, pp. 373, 374. [2] John, xviii, 1.

to, looking up from the page of Scripture."[1] It is an even plat of ground, "not above fifty-seven yards square,"[2] enclosed by a low broken stone fence. A foot-path intersects it in an oblique direction; and as the monks have determined that this is the ground on which Judas walked when he betrayed his Master with a kiss, they have walled it off from the rest, and pronounced it accursed. Eight venerable olive-trees still grow here,[3] and vindicate its claim to be regarded as the very garden to which Christ resorted on the night alluded to, and where he offered the prayer—"Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." The soil below them is bare, without flower or verdure of any kind;[4] as if the penal fires which smote the human nature of the Son of God with such terrible energy had withered also the earth on which he stood, and dried up all the springs of its fertility. No more fitting spot could have been chosen for the awful event of which, eighteen hundred years ago, it was the scene, and which has given to it an eternal interest. Overhung on the one side by the mountain, and on the other by the battlements of the temple and city, while the shadows of the night were still further deepened by the spreading olives of the garden—this was the very spot to which the soul of our Surety, which now began to be "exceeding sorrowful," would naturally turn. The wilderness could not have afforded him a more secluded spot, where his sorrows might flow unseen; and here he was near at hand, and ready against the hour when he

[1] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 60. [2] Maundrell, p. 169.
[3] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 434. [4] Robinson, vol. i, p. 122.

was to be "led as a lamb to the slaughter." With regard to the olives of the modern Gethsemane, the monks affirm that they are the literal trees which stood here on the night referred to. This is impossible; since all the trees in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem were cut down by Titus, to serve in the siege of the city. The olive possesses the power of shooting afresh after it has been cut; and it is just possible that the modern olives of Gethsemane are stems from the old root. The trees are unquestionably of great age and of enormous size.[1]

The valley whose monuments we have described partakes deeply in the desolation which characterises all the scenery around Jerusalem. It has a withered, desolate, and ruinous aspect. The western acclivity has a white chalky appearance. The generally dry bed of the Kedron, which occupies the bottom —the mouldering tomb-stones in the Jewish and Turkish burial-grounds—the grey rocks at the bottom of the mountain—the enclosing hills, whose sides, nearly naked, are of a dull red colour, and relieved only by a few black and parched vines, with some groves of wild olive-trees—the silent city above, "whence no smoke rises, no noise proceeds" —"from the ruinous state of all these tombs, overthrown, broken, and half open, you would imagine that the last trump had already sounded, and that

[1] Chateaubriand employs the following proof, that the trees referred to in the text are at least as old as the time of the eastern empire. "In Turkey every olive tree found standing by the mussulmans when they conquered Asia pays one medine to the treasury; while each of those planted since the Conquest is taxed half its produce by the Grand Seignior. Now the eight olive trees of which we are speaking are charged only eight medines." —Chateaubriand, vol. ii, pp. 34, 35.

the valley of Jehosaphat was about to render up its dead."[1] No one can survey the scene without recalling to mind the touching lament which the Saviour poured over this city in the days of her pride, as he surveyed her from the side of the Mount of Olives—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them who are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, evén as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" And how awfully has the closing prediction been fulfilled—"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."[2]

Beyond the Mount of Olives, on the east, is the village of Bethany—the quiet home of the happy family which "Jesus loved." The distance is not more than two miles from Jerusalem. The path winds over the lower heights of Olivet, and has been "sanctified" by the feet which so often trod it at even-tide. Here the last evenings of our Saviour on earth were passed; for we are told, that, leaving the stormy scene of the day's labours, he "went out of the city into Bethany." On our way to the village, we pass the spot which tradition has fixed on as the site of the fig-tree[3] which Jesus cursed. The

[1] Chateaubriand, vol. ii, p. 34. [2] Matthew, xxiii, 38.

[3] Dr. Shaw, we conceive, has afforded *data* for the true solution of this much-vexed passage. The evangelist tells us "the time of figs was not yet;" why then should the tree have been cursed? Shaw tells us (p. 342,) "that the fruit of these prolific trees always precedes the leaves." The tree to which the Saviour came had leaves on it, though the season was early, and consequently it ought to have had fruit; but the tree appears to have been barren, and was therefore cursed. It was also reasonable to expect the winter fig on a tree apparently so flourishing; but the Saviour found neither, How beautiful the similitude! The "winter" of the Law was over, and the "spring" of the Gospel come; but the Jews had not the fruits proper to either season, and were therefore cursed in their type.

path is still bordered by a few straggling fig-trees.[1] Descending the eastern side of the hill, we enter Bethany—at this day a small hamlet, occupied by Arabs, the fields around lying uncultivated and covered with rank grass[2] and wild flowers. It is easy to imagine the deep and still beauty of this spot when it was the home of Lazarus, and his sisters Martha and Mary. Defended on the north and west by the Mount of Olives, it enjoys a delightful exposure to the southern sun.[3] The grounds around are obviously of great fertility, though quite neglected; and the prospect to the south-east commands a magnificent view of the Dead sea and the plains of Jordan. The monks undertake to show the ruins of the house in which Lazarus lived. The stones are large and the architecture of a sombre cast; but the building unquestionably is of a much more recent erection than the time of Lazarus. Near to it is shown his tomb; and travellers are disposed to grant that this *may* indeed be the sepulchre in which he who was the "Resurrection and the Life" stood and cried—"Lazarus, come forth." It is obviously of great age; and if not the very tomb, in all probability it is similar in character and construction to that which Lazarus did indeed occupy. A flight of steps leads down into a square chamber hewn in the rock. A second descent communicates with another small room, in the side of which is a recess large enough to contain three bodies.[4] "We are allowed to suppose," says Elliot, "that kinded

[1] Sandys, p. 196.
[2] Richardson, vol. ii, p. 371.
[3] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 62.
[4] Wilson, p. 158; Richardson, vol. ii, p. 370.

love had led Martha and Mary to select a resting-place for their brother, where their own mortal remains might sleep with his till the day of resurrection."[1]

We shall now return to Jerusalem, and examine the sepulchral vaults on the north-west of the city, commonly styled "the sepulchres of the kings." Whoever was interred here, neither labour nor expence has been spared in the formation of these chambers. Their size and magnificence render them not unworthy of being the last earthly home of royalty. A path, cut in the rock, leads down into a large open court, the sides of which are very regularly hewn in the limestone rock.[2] In this court, which is about forty paces square, heaps of sand and earth have accumulated.[3] The west end (Maundrell says the south) is hewn smooth into the form of a portico, the entablature and cornices of which are of exquisite workmanship, being ornamented with flowers and fruit.[4] Here are none of the melancholy symbols which we might expect to meet in our approach to these "halls of the dead." The "gloomy cypress" and the "shady elm" give place, around the tombs of the ancient Hebrews, to the vine and other lively and flourishing plants. Perhaps in this we may trace the belief entertained by the Jews of the resurrection of the body—a truth unknown to other nations. So sublime a belief would naturally display itself in their choice of emblems with which to adorn their graves; and hence the very different character of these emblems from those which other nations

[1] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 463.
[2] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 414.
[3] Richardson, vol. ii, p. 360.
[4] Robinson, vol. i, p. 82.

loved to assemble round their last mortal resting-place.[1] The Hebrew symbols had more connection with life than death. On the left side of the portico is an entrance, leading into an ante-chamber, of twelve feet square, hewn also in the rock. The door is so obstructed with stones and rubbish, that the visitor can effect an entrance only on his hands and knees. "But within," says Maundrell, than whom no one has given a finer description of these interesting tombs, "you arrive in a large fair room, about seven or eight yards square, cut out of the natural rock. Its sides and ceiling are so exactly square, and its angles so just, that no architect with levels and plummets could build a room more regular; and the whole is so firm and entire, that it may be called a chamber hollowed out of one piece of marble. From this room you pass into (I think) six more—one within another, all of the same fabric with the first. Of these the two innermost are deeper than the rest, having a second descent of about six or seven steps into them."

"In every one of these rooms except the first were coffins of stone placed in niches in the sides of

[1] It would appear from the following lines of Horace, that the Romans planted *only* the cypress around their graves.

> Linquenda tellus, et domus, et placens
> Uxor; neque harum quas colis, arborum,
> Te, præter invisas cupressos,
> Ulla brevem dominum sequetur.—*Hor.*, lib. ii, car. 14.

The elm appears to have been used by the Greeks on such occasions. Andromache, when speaking to Hector of the death of her father, says that the nymphs planted elms around the mound which was raised over him.

> Ἀλλ' ἄρα μιν κατέκηε σὺν ἔντεσι δαιδαλέοισιν
> Ηὸ' ἐπὶ 'σημ' ἔχεεν· περὶ δὲ πτελέας ἐφύτευσαν
> Νύμφαι Ὀρεστιάδες.—*Iliad*, lib. vi, 417.

the chambers. They had been at first covered with handsome lids, and carved with garlands; but now most of them were broke to pieces by sacrilegious hands. The sides and ceiling of the rooms were always dropping with the moist damps condensing upon them. To remedy which nuisance, and to preserve these chambers of the dead polite and clean, there was in each room a small channel cut in the floor, which served to drain the drops that fall constantly into it.

"But the most surprising thing belonging to these subterraneous chambers was their doors, of which there is only one that remains hanging, being left as it were on purpose, to puzzle the beholders. It consisted of a plank of stone of about six inches in thickness, and in its other dimensions equalling the size of an ordinary door, or somewhat less. It was carved in such a manner as to resemble a piece of wainscot. The stone of which it was made was visibly of the same kind with the whole rock; and it turned upon two hinges in the nature of axles. These hinges were of the same entire piece of stone with the door, and were contained in two holes of the immovable rock, one at the top and the other at the bottom."[1]

Future travellers have added nothing of consequence to the minute and faithful account of Maundrell. The innermost chamber of this great tomb appears to have been the most honourable. It is more richly adorned than any of the others, and has "the mantling vine, with clusters of grapes, twined round the pilasters, and inscribed on the sarcophagi."[2]

[1] Maundrell, pp. 126, 127. [2] Richardson, vol. ii, p. 361.

This chamber contains one object of great interest, the lid of a white marble coffin. "This," says Clarke," was entirely covered with the richest and most beautiful sculpture; but, like all the other sculptured work about the place, it represented nothing of the human figure nor of any animal,[1] but consisted entirely of foliage and flowers, and principally of the leaves and branches of the vine."[2] Sandys informs us, that in his time bones were still to be seen in the stone coffins.[3] These have now disappeared, as well as the single remaining stone door mentioned by Maundrell.

In connection with these subterranean chambers, a very interesting question has been raised, but one on which great variety of opinion exists. Are these the tombs of the kings of the house of David, so often referred to in the inspired writings? We are of opinion that they are; but this supposition has been strongly controverted. Dr. Clarke believes that this was the tomb of Helena, queen of Adiabene, and grounds his opinion on an interpretation of a passage in Josephus. Chateaubriand thinks that these sepulchres were designed for the use of the members of Herod's family, and supports his opinion, likewise, by an appeal to the authority of Josephus. We have not time to refute, or even to state their reasons—we can only mention the grounds of our own opinion. These sepulchres were undoubtedly within the walls of Jerusalem; and we learn from the Scripture history, as well as the Jew-

[1] A certain proof, we should think, that these tombs are entirely Jewish.

[2] Clarke, vol. iv, p. 379. [3] Sandys, p. 175.

ish writers, that to be buried within the city was a distinction conceded only to royalty. They are about a mile north of the modern Jerusalem; but the ancient city must have extended much farther in this direction, which is indeed the only direction in which it could have extended far beyond its present limits. The opinion, that they were designed for royalty is favoured likewise by their great extent and magnificence. The only objection worthy of serious attention, which we have seen urged against this supposition, is, that the "sepulchres of the kings of Judah" are said to have been in "the city of David;" and the "city of David" is always viewed as restricted to Mount Zion. But we know no reason why it should be *always* so restricted. In one passage,[1] the "city of David" is unquestionably used as an appellative for Jerusalem generally. Josephus, in speaking of these sepulchres, says simply that they were in "Jerusalem." The inspired historian, in recording the burial of Amaziah, who was assassinated in Lachish, states, that "they brought him on horses; and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers, in the city of David."[2] In recording the same event in Chronicles, it is said, that he was buried "with his fathers in the city of Judah."[3] If the comparatively modern style of the ornaments be objected to the opinion we are advocating, it may be answered, that the tombs being excavated and not built, these embellishments might easily have been added in an after age, by some one who wished to adorn the last abode of the monarchs who had worn the crown and filled the throne of David.

[1] Isaiah, xxix, 1. [2] 2 Kings, xiv, 20. [3] 2 Chron. xxv, 28.

We think, then, that we are entitled to regard these celebrated excavations as indeed the sepulchres of Judah's kings—the last earthly home of the mighty chiefs of the line of David. Viewed in this light, how interesting the associations to which they give birth. And was it here that the harp of Jesse's son was at last unstrung, the man who so sweetly said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil"? Was it to these dim sepulchral vaults that Solomon came, after all his glory? Alas! when we think of the monarch who filled the earth with the fame of his wisdom, dwelling here in silence, "as a dead man out of mind," what exclamation so natural as that which he himself has taught us to employ—"How dieth the wise man? as the fool!" And was it here that the upright Jehosaphat, and the good Hezekiah found rest after all their troubles, and that Josiah was hid, and saw not the evil which came upon his people? How awful and venerable the spot! Here the cares of government never intrude, nor can the storms of state ever disturb the profound silence of these hallowed chambers. In this august abode, which we tread with greater reverence than we would the palace of the proudest monarch, peace and silence shall continue to dwell, like twin watchers beside the mighty dead, till the morning of a better day shall shine, and the archangel's trumpet sound, to awaken the honoured dust, to which it offered a place of last repose.

CHAPTER VI.

PLAINS AND VALLEYS WEST OF JERUSALEM.

Leave the city by the Bethlehem gate—Traverse a stony plain—Enter the western mountains of Judah—Form of the hills—Valley of Elah—Vale of Jeremiah—Wilderness of St. John—Valley of Sorek—Pre-eminence in vines—Nakedness of mountains—Prospect of the Plain of Sharon from the western ridge—Cross the plain—Numerous ruined villages—Arrive at Jaffa—Gardens—Ancient fertility of Valley of Sharon—Present appearance—Traverse the plain from north to south—Character of the country for twelve miles south of Carmel—Waad-el-Ajal, or Valley of Death—Excavated dwellings on the sea-shore—Arrive at the ruins of Cæsarea—Character of the plain at this part—Method of agriculture—Arrive at Jaffa—Character of the country south to Ashdod—From Ashdod to Askelon—Strong position of Askelon—Country to Gaza—Beauty of Gaza—Bedouin flocks—Village of Juide—Sand begins—River of Egypt—Fortress of El Arish.

We now enter on our second stage, namely, that from Jerusalem to Jaffa—the ancient Joppa, situated on the coast, about forty miles north-west of Jerusalem. Leaving the city by the Bethlehem gate, we first traverse the stony plain lying between the city walls and the western hills. Here are to be seen, according to Sandys, numerous sepulchres, and the vestiges of ruined buildings.[1] On the right is the

[1] Sandys, pp. 200, 201.

lofty mountain of Silo, so long a station of the ark. It towers pre-eminent among the western hills of Judah, as if still conscious of superior dignity, from the sacred burden which it bore in former times. Entering the mountainous range before us, the path becomes rugged and dangerous. The mountains unite at their bottom, but are rounded off at their summits. No vegetation is seen—a scanty soil covers their rocky sides; and though a little verdure exists here after the rains of spring,[1] it is entirely burnt up in the course of the summer, when the mountains put on a "red and vivid" appearance.[2] Everywhere the ruins of cottages and convents announce the decay of human industry;[3] and here and there a solitary fig-tree, growing wild, struggles to hide the parched earth from the rays of the burning sun.

Continuing our course for about an hour, we descend into a valley, whose partial cultivation affords an agreeable relief, after the wilderness through which we have passed. Let us observe it carefully, for it is one of great Scriptural renown. It runs from north to south; its sides, arranged in terraces, are clothed in part with vineyards and dhoura, whilst a stream of water winds through its bottom.[4] This is the VALLEY OF ELAH, or as it is sometimes termed the Terebinth vale; and the scene of David's victory over Goliath. No one can survey the spot without observing how exactly its answers the description given of it in the Scripture history: "Saul and the

[1] Robinson, vol. i, p. 35.
[2] Chateaubriand, vol. i, p. 321.
[3] Mariti, vol. ii, p. 301.
[4] Mariti, vol. ii, p. 300; Robinson, vol. i, p. 34.

men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them."[1] The outlines of the scene are the same now as they were then, when it daily resounded to the taunts and threats of the Philistine, whose haughty challenge the armies of Israel, which were assembled on the eastern declivity, dared not to accept till a youth came from the folds of sheep, and equiping himself with a sling, and going to the brook at the bottom, and choosing him "five smooth stones," met the Philistine, and singly vindicated the liberties of his nation, and the honour of the God of Israel.[2]

From this, a narrow and rugged pass through the mountains leads into the VALLEY OF JEREMIAH. This is a long, narrow, and barren vale. Its sides are steep, and shaggy with brushwood. A few goats may sometimes be seen, browsing on its scanty pastures, tended by ferocious-looking Arabs.[3] At the head of the vale is an Arab village, built, according to the common notion, on the site of the ancient Anathoth, the birth-place of the prophet Jeremiah; and hence the name of the valley. Above it, on the peak of a hill, is the residence of a robber chief—Aboogosh, long the terror of the traveller in this part

[1] 1 Samuel, xvii, 2, 3.

[2] The monks of the neighbourhood have often sought for the identical stones, and, considering the facility which these persons possess of finding whatever they seek for, it is truly surprising they have not found them.

[3] Wilson, p. 105.

of the Holy Land.[1] "I was sorry," says Mariti, "to find the immense plains between the castle of the Good Robber,[2] and the rivulet of Terebint entirely neglected. Were there ever so little care bestowed on them, they would produce an hundred fold."[3] The ruins of the church erected here in primitive times, and dedicated to Jeremiah, now serve as an enclosure for flocks, which couch beside pilasters, on which rude paintings of saints, according to Mariti, are still visible.

The general name of the wilderness of St. John is given to this district, including the vale of Elah, with its enclosing hills. This name is derived from an opinion—although we know not on what foundation it rests—that here the Harbinger of the Messiah lived till "the day of his showing unto Israel." The cave which he occupied is shown in the mountains, on the west of the vale of Elah, and without determining whether this be the scene of the Baptist's youth, we shall quote the description of Sandys, which is beautiful in itself, and interesting as an account of this part of the land of Judea: "The cave is seated on the northerne side of a desart mountaine (only beholding to the locust-tree) hewne out of the precipitating rocke; so as difficultly to be ascended or descended to: entred at the east corner, and receiving light from a window in the side. At the upper end there is a bench of the selfesame rock, whereon

[1] Robinson, vol. ii, p. 34.

[2] Not the residence of the Arab chief we have just named, but a ruined building, near the western plains, within ten miles of Rama, supposed to be the birth-place of the thief who was converted on the cross.—See Sandys, pp. 201, 202.

[3] Mariti, vol. ii, p. 300.

(as they say) he accustomed to sleep; of which whoso breaks a piece off stands forthwith excommunicate. Over this, on a little flat, stand the ruines of a monastery, on the south side naturally walled with the steepe of a mountaine: from whence there gusheth a living spring, which entereth the rock, and again bursteth forth beneath the mouth of the cave; a place that would make solitariness delightfull, and stand in comparison with the turbulent pompe of cities. This overlooketh a profound valley, on the far side hemed with aspiring mountains; whereof some are cut (or naturally so) in degrees like allies, which would be els unaccessably fruitelesse; whose levels yet beare the stumps of decayed vines: shaddowed not rarely with olives and locusts." [1]

Before returning to our route, which leads us in a north-west direction from Jerusalem to the border of the "Great sea;" we shall go a little to the south; and examine a valley of considerable historical interest, which lies in that direction. This is the VALLEY OF SOREK, and according to one opinion, the ESCHOL, from whose vine-clad brook the spies carried away the enormous cluster of grapes, which furnished the tribes in the wilderness with so convincing a proof of the great fertility of their future possessions. Traversing the southern hills of the wilderness of St. John, we enter the commencement of a broad and deep valley, which takes a south-west direction, and after running for about four miles, bends westward, and continues its course to the sea. This is the vale we have named—the valley of Sorek, and perhaps of Eschol. Not lying near any of the

[1] Sandys, p. 183.

common routes, travellers have seldom visited it. It is bounded on both sides by barren hills—so barren indeed that those on the west look as if they were scraped. Its bottom is the bed of a winter-torrent, which has its rise in the mountains of the wilderness of the Baptist, and after following all the turnings of the valley, and running for about forty miles, falls into the sea, between Askelon and Ashdod. Its cultivation, at this day, is superior to most parts of the Holy Land; here we meet not only fields of grain, but vineyards, and plantations of fig-trees. Of old, the "vine of Sorek" was pre-eminent for its excellence in this land of vines; and as such was the subject of several Scriptural encomiums. Nor has the vale altogether lost its ancient reputation in this respect: the wine produced from its vineyards is still the best in all Palestine.[1] [2]

Returning from the vale of Sorek, we shall resume our course at the point where we diverged. From the valley of Jeremiah the tract through the mountains is dreary beyond imagination, and even terrific. All the characters of desolation which we have already described, as belonging to the moun-

[1] We would not enter into the controversy, whether the valley of Sorek or that of Mamre be the Eschol of Scripture. This distinction has been claimed for each of these valleys; and the pretensions of both may be supported on the ground of the abundance and superiority of their vines.

The Scripture does not accurately determine the position of the "brook Eschol;" but it speaks of the arrival of the spies at Hebron before it records the transaction at Eschol, a circumstance which ought certainly to weigh in favour of the plain of Mamre. Num. xiii, 22, 23.

[2] It is the word שׂרק which has been rendered "choice vine" in Gen. xlix, 11—"the choicest vine" in Isa. v, 2—and "noble vine" in Jer. ii, 21. It might, in all these passages, have been rendered "the vine of Sorek."

tains lying between Jerusalem and the vale of Elah, are here continued, and even encreased. At times the path lies over the summit of the hills; at other times it leads through narrow defiles, overhung by frowning heights, and infested by robbers. The rocky sides of the mountains are scarcely able to nourish any plant. The thin grass is brown and sun-burnt. Here and there a low shrub or a solitary tree is seen, standing "at very unfriendly and forlorn distances from each other." The lime-stone rock juts out, not in bold cliffs, but in regularly arranged strata, "having exactly the appearance of stone courses in a building."[1] They are ranged, says Chateaubriand, like "the seats of a Roman Amphitheatre, or like the walls in the form of flights of steps which support the vineyards in the valleys of Savoy."[2][3] The white naked rock which every where appears, and the entire absence of man and animals in this region, fill the mind of the traveller with images of death, and communicate to the country an aspect of desolation which, as has been remarked, it is impossible for the pen to describe, or the pencil to portray. The approach to these mountains on the west is thus described by Richardson: "For sometime before we reached the mountains we kept looking up at their dusky sides, as they rose in towering grandeur to the height of a thousand or fifteen hundred feet above our heads.[4] Of the passage through them, Wilson thus speaks: "I was

[1] Richardson, vol. ii, p. 221. [2] Chateaubriand, vol. i, p. 318.

[3] This natural arrangement of the rock may have suggested to the first inhabitants of Judea the propriety of employing terraces in the cultivation of the mountains.

[4] Richardson, vol. ii, p. 221.

almost overpowered with fatigue, by traversing a tract so difficult and dreary, where an awful solemn stillness reigns, not even broken by the whistling of a bird." [1]

At last we ascend the western ridge of the Judean hills, and from its summit look down on the plains of Rama, and the blue waters of the ocean. From the foot of Carmel south to Gaza the whole coast is now under our eye.[2] The spacious prospect exhilarates the spirits after the oppression induced by the nakedness and desolation of the country through which we have passed. The slopes which run down to the plain are less barren than the hills now lying behind us, being partially covered with wild flowers, among which pink and white roses predominate.[3]

From the bottom of the mountains our way lies over a plain, broken by slight undulations, to the town of Ramah—the ancient Arimathea—distant about ten miles from the "Hill-country of Judea." Leaving Ramah, we continue our journey over the plain, and in three hours arrive at Jaffa. This town, formerly the principal port in Palestine, but now superseded by Beyrout, is situated on the slope of a hill overlooking the Mediterranean. On our way thither we are particularly struck with the great number of villages, abandoned, or lying in ruins.[4] The great fertility of the soil; which is such as to invite cultivation, although few are found to obey the call, leaves us at a loss to account for so extraordinary a circumstance, and we are able to refer it only

[1] Wilson, p. 106.

[2] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 237, compared with Chateaubriand, vol. i, p. 318.

[3] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 508. [4] Robinson, vol. i, p. 25.

to the despotism of the government, and the lawless state of the country. Approaching the environs of the city, the road lies between the well-known gardens of Jaffa—the most extensive and celebrated in all Palestine. They are fenced with hedges of the prickly pear; a well-known plant in the east, and one which forms a more impenetrable barrier than the strongest stone-wall. The space within these enclosures is stocked with pomegranates, oranges, and fig-trees, amid which rises an occasional tower; the summer retreat of the Jaffa merchant, where he enjoys at once the beauty of the gardens, and the cool Mediterranean breezes.

The plain lying between the mountains and the coast, which we have traversed so rapidly, is one of great Scriptural celebrity; and the renown it formerly enjoyed renders it incumbent on us to pay particular attention to its present state. This is the VALE OF SHARON so celebrated of old for its beauty, and the great extent and richness of its pasture grounds. In the geographical outline of the country, we have indicated the limits which are to be assigned to this celebrated plain. From Carmel on the north to Gaza in the south; and from the coast to the mountains of Samaria, and Judea inland—an extent of territory of about an hundred miles in length, by about twenty in breadth. At least travellers sometimes apply the name of Sharon to the whole plain, although, we apprehend, the Scriptural use of the term is more strictly referrible to those parts which bordered, or nearly so, on the high road which led from Joppa to the capital.[1] The present aspect of the plain

[1] Eusebius gives the designation of Sharon to that part of the

varies at different points. Flourishing woods; rich pastures, sprinkled with white clover, or enamelled with wild flowers; marshes; fields of thistles; sandy deserts; ruins of towns and villages—such is the varied appearance which the surface of this plain presents at this day. Its general state is that of a luxuriant but uncultivated waste. A rapid journey over it, from Carmel to El Arish, an hundred and fifty miles, will afford us the means of judging more accurately.[1]

We have already said that Carmel is formed by a range of hills which branch off from the central chain of Judea, and stretch across the country in a north-west direction to the coast. This range forms the southern boundary of the bay of Acre, the road leading out of which winds round the bottom of the promontory formed by the hills where they run into the sea. We shall begin our journey at this point. We proceed southwards along a plain of about a mile and a half in breadth, having Carmel on our left, and on the right the waves of the Mediterranean beating

plain which lies between Cesarea and Joppa. Καὶ ἄλλος ἐστί Σαρωνὰς ἡ ἀπὸ Καισαρείας τῆς Ἰοππην χωρα.—Eusebius, quoted by Reland, tom. i, lib. i, cap. xxxii. Jerome, in his Commentary on the thirty-third chapter of Isaiah, says, "Saron omnis circa Joppen Lyddamque appellatur regio in qua latissimi campi fertilesque reddunturi." In reference to the quotation from Eusebius, we may mention that there was another Sharon situated somewhere in the possessions of Israel, and most probably on the east of the Jordan, as it is mentioned in connection with the tribe of Gad, 1 Chron. v, 16.

[1] The authorities here are rather scanty. Several have crossed the vale of Sharon: some few have tracked part of it from south to north; but we do not, at this moment, recollect of a single traveller who has ascended it the whole way from Gaza to Carmel, save Irby and Mangles. Those who have traversed part of this line have kept near the coast, and thus had little opportunity of examining the general or inland character of the plain.

against a rocky coast. This plain is covered with bushes, and is the resort of wild boars and king vultures, which are sometimes seen here from four to five feet high. Continuing our way for three miles, we enter on a cultivated plain, the mountains of Carmel, which run on our left, falling farther into the back ground as we advance, till at last the broad plain of Sharon opens before us. We continue for nine miles, pursuing our way along the eastern side of a low range of sandy hills, which run between us and the sea, till we come to the mouth of the Waad-el-Ajal, "the Valley of Death." This is a deep cut through a bed of rock, in breadth just sufficient for the passage of a wheeled carriage, having on each side raised causeways for foot passengers, hewn down out of the rock. It leads through the hills to the shore, and bears marks of having once been closed by a gate. Traversing this pass, we again turn to the south, and continue along the western side of the heights through which it is cut: the rock which borders the path is hewn into chambers, and these excavations continue for about six miles. We now enter a wide pass, the rock rising on the right as well as on the left, and on each side are grottoes and caverns. Some of these chambers have been formed with great care and skill; they are entered by an arched door; they have stone benches within; and in some instances, a flight of steps leads from one to another. They bear marks of great antiquity, and have obviously been inhabited in an early age. Buckingham gives it as his opinion that these excavations are the "habitations of the ancient Canaanites, some of their strongholds near the sea, from which the children of Israel could not dislodge

them." The place must have been of great strength, for the passes leading to it on the east and south could be easily defended. A journey of three miles from the entrance of the wide pass on the south brings us to the ruins of Tartoura—the Dor of Scripture.[1]

Continuing on our way, we behold a ruined aqueduct running along the shore, and nearly entombed by the drifted sand; and seven miles after leaving Dor, we are standing amid the low long mounds of a fallen city; the country around is a sandy desert, and there is not an inhabitant on the spot to tell us that these are the ruins of the once princely Cæsarea, where Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come, whilst Felix trembled.

Leaving Cæsarea, still called by the Arabs, Kissary, we journey for six miles along a sandy beach. The road next turns up into the plain: we are now in what is properly the valley of Sharon. In spring, this part of the plain is covered with a fresh verdure as far as the eye can reach. "The white clover," says Monro, "springs spontaneously; and among a variety of shrubs and flowers were a few dwarf tulips." When our traveller passed it, storks were striding to and fro over it, and appeared to be its only tenants. The soil is light, the surface elastic, and gently undulating; but in the eastern part of the plain these undulations assume the character of hills, overtopped, however, by the great central chain of the country. To Buckingham this

[1] Joshua, xvii, 11. The tribe of Manasseh were unable to drive out the inhabitants of Dor, and obliged to let them remain as tributaries.

part of the plain appeared a "desert ground." There is no doubt that both travellers have described it as they found it; and the only reason we can assign for the very different appearance of the plain is, that Monro visited it in spring, whereas Buckingham traversed it in mid-winter. Paxton, who crossed it in the end of summer, says that the greater part was destitute of verdure, the burning heats of summer having completely scorched the grass. The soil, he tells us, is a fine rich black mould, and would yield abundantly were it cultivated. In passing over this celebrated plain, he thought of the "rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley;" and so eager was he to discover them, that had he met with any thing in the vegetable world at all resembling what he conceived of these celebrated flowers, he would have allowed them the honour of being their modern representatives; but he met with nothing of the kind. Others have thought to make this discovery, but with no better success. Some portions in the interior of the plain, near the hills of Samaria, which form its eastern boundary at this part, are beautifully wooded. Sandys passed along its eastern border, on his way from Jerusalem to Carmel. "After a while," says he, "we entered a goodly forest, full of tall and delightful trees, intermixed with fruitful and flowery lawns. Perhaps the earth affordeth not the like: it cannot a more pleasant." Leaving the wood, he speaks of crossing the "pregnant champion to the foote of the mountains," showing that rich meadow land extended to the foot of the hills of Samaria.

Pursuing the inland route for three miles, we

again return to the shore. We proceed for three miles along the beach, and again turn up and enter on a desert ground; the surface is sandy, and nourishes long wild grass and a few bushes, on which flocks of goats, attended by Bedouin boys, are sometimes seen browsing. Continuing our way four miles farther, we ascend a gentle hill, and come in sight of an extensive and beautiful plain, covered with a carpet of verdure, and sprinkled over with a few trees. On our left is a small cluster of dwellings, resembling an Egyptian village in its poverty and filth. What renders the condition of its inhabitants the more surprising, is, that the plains around surpass in extent, and, to all appearance, equal in fertility those of Acre, of Zabulon, or of Carmel. In this miserable place the traveller can scarcely procure a morsel of bread: the inhabitants are starving on a bounteous soil.

About four miles beyond this village we enter a narrow pass, with caves similar to those at Waad-el-Ajal. This pass leads us out upon an elevated plain, part of which is cultivated. When Buckingham passed it husbandmen were sowing, and flocks of starlings were laying a heavy contribution on the seed. With reference to the mode of agriculture pursued in this country, we may here remark, that the furrow is very shallow, the rich soil not requiring to be ploughed deep, the seed is thrown on the ground, and afterwards ploughed in; or, it is simply cast on the ploughed land, without being covered by harrowing, as in Europe. The plough is of the simplest construction: generally a branch, or small tree cut below a bifurcation; the share is of wood, with an iron point. With one hand the husbandman guides the

plough, while he carries in the other a rod armed at the extremity with a sharp piece of iron, with which he clears away weeds from the share of his instrument, or chastises the oxen. The whole apparatus is so light that the husbandman often carries his plough home upon his shoulder when he returns from the field at night. In the light sandy soils of this plain melons thrive remarkably well. On sowing his field, the peasant retires to his village in the neighbouring mountains, and seldom visits his crop till harvest, when he comes to reap. Nature, ever bounteous, has taught this juicy and refreshing fruit to flourish in the driest soils, where it is most needed and most grateful.

Proceeding along this plain for six miles, we come to Heram, a small village, seated on a high promontory overlooking the Mediterranean, whose hoarse murmur is heard at a great distance below. At the entrance of the village are excavated dwellings similar to those we have already noticed. From the village we descend to the beach, and travel for eight miles under brown cliffs and hills. We now approach Jaffa, and can see its buildings thickly crowded on the face of the eminence before us. Turning up from the shore, and passing through the Turkish burial ground, we enter the city by the great gate in the eastern wall.

Leaving Jaffa, we enter the ancient territory of the Philistines; our route along the coast will comprise a view of the dwellings of these once powerful neighbours of the Israelites. The gardens on this side of the city descend into the middle of the plain, the air is perfumed with the odour of their fruits and flowers, and the road which lies through them is bordered with the Indian fig. The impression which

their beauty makes on the traveller arises to a great degree from the contrast which they offer to the fields around, which are seen lying in a state of nature. Emerging from the gardens, we enter on the open plain; on our right is the sea, with sand hills running along the shore; inland is a fine rolling plain, partially cultivated; but, "upon the whole," says Richardson, "the plantations of thistles are quite as numerous as the fields of grain." Of this part of the county Sandys writes, that no part is "so barren but would prove most profitable if planted with vines and fruits." After a journey of eighteen miles, we arrive at Ashdod. To this place the Philistines carried the ark, which they had taken in their wars with Israel, and having brought it into the house of Dagon, their god, the idol was overthrown. The town is situated on the summit of a grassy hill, commanding a fine view of the extensive and beautifully undulating country around. This tract is thinly inhabited and little cultivated.

Pursuing our way to the south, the country continues undulating; luxuriant crops of thistles cover its surface, and these, which in some places line the road on both sides, are the only proofs we behold of the fertile character of the soil. The country is open; in some parts not a tree is in sight. Traversing a plain covered with a plentiful mixture of grass and sand, we arrive at the ruins of Askelon.

This was another of the five cities of the Philistines. Its position must have been strong, seeing nature assisted art in its defence. Seated on the shore, the sea defended it on one side, while a natural wall of rock ran round it in the form of a semi-

circle, enclosing a deep hollow in which the town was placed. The fortifications of Askelon were erected on the enclosing line of rock, and their foundations may still be traced all the way round.

Descending from Askelon, we travel for a short way along the shore. Turning up, and crossing the sand hills which run along the beach, we enter on a fine plain; on our right, as we pursue our way to the south, are the sandy heights we have just crossed, sprinkled with olives; on our left are crops of wheat and barley; but the plain, which is here about twenty miles in breadth, is mostly covered with wild herbage. The tents of the Bedouins are numerous, and their flocks are seen ranging over the face of the country. "The champion," says Sandys, "between about twenty miles ouer; full of flowery hills ascending leasurely, and not much surmounting their rancker vallies: with groues of oliues, and other fruites dispersedly adorned." He tells us that this rich tract is uninhabited, save by a few Arabs, who till only what may suffice to feed them: "the grasse wast-high, unmowed, uneaten, and uselessly withering." Approaching within three miles of Gaza, we enter a forest of olives. This wood is the resort of storks, which are sometimes seen ranged like sentinels on its borders; the olive trees, which are old and large, are not gathered in clumps, but are spread thinly over the soil; the air circulates freely round them, the vegetation at their roots is abundant, and this extensive grove needs only dressing to render it a beautiful and well arranged domain. Traversing this forest, we reach Gaza. The situation of this town is not unlike Samaria in the north; it is placed on a central hill,

which, at its base, is two miles in circumference, and appears to have been wholly enclosed by the ancient fortifications; at the foot of the hill is a circular valley, which again is nearly enclosed by more distant hills. These rise gently on the sight, their altitudes increasing as they recede, and, being tolerably clothed, the view is beautiful. The neighbourhood of the town is laid out in gardens, which are well stocked with olives, figs, mulberries, and tall spreading sycamores. The gardens are enclosed as usual with hedges of the Indian fig, called commonly the prickly pear, whose large yellow blossoms enliven the prospect. The poverty of the town forms a singular contrast to the beauty of the region in which it is situated. Some of the houses are of stone, others of mud, the roofs being formed of mats and hurdles; "amongst all, not any comely or convenient," says Sandys. "Yet are there some relics left that testifie a better condition; for diuers simple roofes are supported with goodly pillars of Parian marble: some plain, some curiously carved. A number broken in pieces do serue for thresholds, jambes of doores, and sides of windows almost unto euery beggarly cottage. On the north-east corner and summitte of the hill are the ruins of huge arches sunk low in the earth, and other indications of a stately building."

We leave Gaza on the south by a road which winds through the gardens, and leads us out upon extensive plains, fertile and tolerably cultivated. At a great distance in the east are the purple-coloured hills of Judea. In some parts the road is covered to a considerable depth with sand, which the winds have brought up from the shore, which, at this point,

is distant about four miles. Inland, the plain is beautifully undulating, and though its character generally be pastoral, yet here and there we perceive crops of tobacco, lentils, and even wheat and barley. The tents of the Bedouins, ranged along the foot of the neighbouring hills, the flocks, with their numerous attendants, covering the plain, and the shiekhs on horseback, busy amongst their sheep and cattle, often present a very animated picture, and remind one of the patriarchal days of Abraham and Lot. The same scenes which the plains of Gaza present at this day the plains of Beersheba must have exhibited four thousand years ago. Thus roamed the flocks of the patriarchs, and thus Abraham and Lot busied themselves among their herds. The wells of the country are still accounted a valuable possession, and often occasion strifes between the different herdsmen. The country has frequently changed its masters, but the habits of the natives have remained stationary.

After a journey of twenty-five or twenty-six miles from Gaza, we reach the ruined village of Shiekh Juide. Here the fine pastoral scenery terminates, and the sand begins to struggle with the grass for the superiority. On the right we obtain occasional glimpses of the sea; a narrow valley sometimes runs across the country, partially cultivated, but even on the portions ploughed and sown, the weeds so contend with the corn that it is difficult to say which is best entitled to the possession of the soil. As we advance, the aspect of the country grows more dreary. At length, after a journey of twenty miles from the village last named, we reach El Arish.

The river forms the boundary between Egypt and Palestine. A small eminence rises on its banks, with a fortress, garrisoned by a few Egyptian soldiers; below it, on the eastern slope, is the small village of El Arish. Clouds of sand often drift across it, and present the appearance of a snow storm, the resemblance being greatly heightened by the white aspect of the limestone rock on which the village and fortress are seated. At this point all vegetation ceases; beyond us, on the south, nothing is seen but naked sands. Here, therefore, we shall terminate our journey.[1]

[1] The authorities consulted for this account of the coast from Mount Carmel to El Arish are,—Sandys, pp. 149—152; Irby and Mangles, pp. 174—195; Buckingham, vol. ii, pp. 189—228; Richardson, vol. ii, pp. 190—208; Monro, vol. i, pp. 60—89; Paxton, pp. 103—109.

CHAPTER VII.

VALLEYS AND PLAINS NORTH OF JERUSALEM.

Outline of two remaining stages—Leave Jerusalem on the north—Ruins of ancient city—Tombs of the judges—Barrenness of the country—Hill of Samuel—Beer—Hills of Ephraim—Remains of terraces—Present desolation—Plain of Bethel—Ruins of city—Village of Ainbroot, Bethoron of Scripture—Beauty of its situation—Barren scenery returns—Enter the region of Samaria—Vale of Lebonah—Efforts at cultivation—Parcel of ground which Jacob gave to Joseph—Enter the Valley of Shechem—Well of Jacob—Mountains Ebal and Gerizim—Tomb of Joseph—City of Shechem—Great beauty of its position—Ascent over the hills—Arrival at Samaria—"Fat valleys of Israel"—Brief account of the province of Samaria—Distinguished anciently by the cultivation of the olive and the vine—Still contains many beautiful prospects—Enter the valley of Jennin—Castle of Sanpoor—Town of Jennin—Remarks on the supposition that this is the royal city of Ahab—Plain of Esdraelon—Dimensions—Great fertility of its soil—Grandeur of its ancient appearance—Present aspect—Great historical celebrity—Vale of Zabulon—Plain of Acre—Magnificent prospect—Poverty of inhabitants—Vale of Abilene—Vale of Sepphoris—Cross the plain of Esdraelon—Ruins of ancient towns on its bosom—Tract through the hills of Nazareth—City and vale of Nazareth—Barren scenery—Road to Cana—Ascent to the village—Stone pots—General character of the country from Cana north to Lebanon.

Two stages remain to complete our journey over the Land of Promise. Making Jerusalem again our starting point, we shall thence ascend by the vale

of Shechem and the plain of Esdraelon, to the foot of Lebanon. This tract will allow us to visit several sites of great scriptural celebrity: the plain on which Jacob slept when he saw the vision; the valley in which the ashes of Joseph repose; the hill on which the celebrated capital of the ten tribes stood; the vale of Nazareth; and the plains so often traversed by our Lord at the beginning of the gospel. We shall descend by the valley of the Jordan, a route which will afford us an opportunity of examining the region lying on the lake of Tiberias, illustrated in former times by the presence, the ministry, and the miracles of the Son of God. Our journey shall terminate on the shores of that dark lake, which remains to this day an impressive monument of the awful judgment inflicted by Heaven, in the morning of the world, on the cities of the plain.

Leaving the City by the northern gate, on the road leading to Damascus, we cross a plain which unquestionably formed part of the site of the ancient Jerusalem; since it is not difficult still to trace on it the remains of buildings—in fact, it is covered with mounds of ruins.[1] Journeying about a mile, we pass the sepulchres of the kings already described; and at the distance of about three quarters of an hour from the city walls, on the right, are the tombs of the judges, as they are termed. These sepulchres consist of six chambers hewn in the limestone rock, in each of which are niches for the reception of dead bodies. They have long since been despoiled of the dust of their original tenants, and are now filled with

[1] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 295.

rubbish and water.[1] Pursuing our way to the north, about a mile beyond the sepulchres of the judges, we ascend a slight eminence.[2] Here the mosques and minarets of the holy city sink behind us, while before us opens the mountainous country through which our track lies. The path is hilly and stony.[3] The eye scarcely discerns a cultivated spot, and the signs of human dwelling are equally rare. This whole land is desolate; but the desolation is peculiarly marked in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Approach the city from whatever quarter you may, you travel to it through naked mountains and barren vales. The enormous wickedness of the capital seems still to be punished in the greater sterility of the region lying around the ruinous town which occupies the site, and receives the name of the ancient Jerusalem. On the west of the road rises a lofty mountain, the Djebel Samyel, crowned with the ruins of Ramah, the supposed birth-place and tomb of Samuel.[4] A mosque marks the spot where the prophet sleeps; and, within, his tomb is covered with a carpet, the invariable practice of the Turks in reference to celebrated graves. A few Arab huts are seen beside the ruins; otherwise the site is completely destroyed.[5] The supposition we have mentioned—that this hill is the place of the birth and burial of Samuel, is very probably correct. For,

[1] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 414. [2] Joliffe, vol. i, p. 52.
[3] Lindsay, vol. i, p. 71.
[4] This agrees with the situation assigned to Ramah by Reland, on the authority of Eusebius.—"רמה Urbs in Benjamin. Jos. xviii, 25."—"Aberat 6 miliaria ab Ælia sive Jerusalem ad septentrionem contra Bethel, teste Eusebio in Onomastico."—Palest. Illust., tom. ii, p. 963.
[5] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 295.

independently of the fact that it still retains his name, it is the highest mountain in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and must have appeared in time of war the most favourable position on which to station scouts to watch the motions of the enemy;[1] and that such was the use sometimes made of Ramah of Samuel is evident, we think, from the name given to it in Scripture—Ramathaim Zophim, "the heights of the lookers out."[2]

From the point we have reached—the eminence which hides Jerusalem from our view—our way still lies through a stony country, affording the sight of several ruined villages.[3] Three hours[4] after leaving Jerusalem, we come to Beer, the Michmash of Scripture, to which Jotham fled to escape the vengeance of his brother Abimelech.[5] It derives its modern name from a delicious spring situated at the bottom of the hill on which the village is built. The waters of this fountain are exceedingly grateful to

[1] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 413.

[2] That the Ramah in which Samuel lived, and where he was buried, was so called, is evident from comparing the 1st with the 19th verse of the 1st chapter of 1st Samuel.

[3] Maundrell, p. 111.

[4] Clarke, vol. iv, p. 287.—According to later travellers, the distance is three and a half hours.—Robinson, Lindsay.

[5] Maundrell, p. 107.—Clarke, vol. iv, 287, remarks—"This position of Michmash by Maundrell by no means agrees with the situation assigned to it by Reland, (Palest. Illust., tom. ii, p. 897, Traj. Bat. 1714,) upon the authority of Eusebius.—'Est vicus grandis 9 mil. ab Ælia (Hierosolyma) prope Rama, teste Eusebio.'" With all respect for the opinion of Clarke, we conceive that in this instance he is mistaken; and that the position of Beer agrees with that of Michmash as given by Reland. It is nigh to Ramah, and cannot be much above nine miles from Jerusalem; for in so rough a road as that which leads from the capital northwards, it is hardly possible to accomplish a greater distance in three hours, the time usually occupied in travelling to it.

the traveller in so desert a country. From the days of Helena, who here built a church to commemorate the event, this has been looked upon as the spot where the parents of Jesus, on their return from the capital, discovered that their son was amissing, and whence they returned to Jerusalem to seek him. This was then, as now, the high-road from Jerusalem to Galilee; and no doubt they halted somewhere on this line, although we are disposed to think at a point considerably beyond this, otherwise their day's journey must have been short.[1]

A little beyond Beer two roads meet.[2] We take that on the right, as it leads to Nablous, the ancient Shechem. From Beer our path lies through a country where, although all is desolate, the broken sides of the naked and towering mountains communicate something of grandeur to the prospect. "All this day's travel," says Maundrell, "from Kane Leban to Beer, and also so far as we could see around, the country, discovered a quite different face from what it had before, presenting nothing to the view in most places but naked rocks, mountains, and precipices; at the sight of which pilgrims are apt to be much astonished."[3] The path, which is narrow and rugged, leads over mountains, and at times by the edge of precipices.[4] It is clear to any one who will examine them, that these hills, bare and unproductive as they are at this day, were once cultivated—that in happier times, when they were the abode of a free, an abundant, and industrious people, the olive and the vine clothed their sides; whilst the terraces, of which evi-

[1] Luke, ii, 44.
[2] Richardson, vol. ii, 405.
[3] Maundrell, p. 108.
[4] Clarke, vol. iv, p. 286.

dent traces yet remain, supported crops of grain, melons, cucumbers, and other plants of a similar description. But far different is the dreary prospect which they now exhibit. It is rare indeed that the traveller can discover the trace of a human hand, or the sight of a human dwelling; although in former times they were inhabited by the powerful tribe of Ephraim. The tyranny of man discouraged their cultivation. The terraces were allowed to fall into ruin—the elements stript their sides of the earth which once covered them, and left their naked and frowning precipices to speak to the traveller of the truth of Him who said—"Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground." [1]

In about two hours and a half [2] after leaving Beer, we arrive on the little plain of Bethel. Here it was, says Maundrell, that Jacob "had his stony couch made easy, by that beautifying vision of God and of the angels." The ground at this day is covered with stones, [3] and the plain is bounded and overshadowed by lofty and rocky mountains. [4] This plain, after being long the seat of an opulent town, which flourished not only in the days of Jeroboam, who here set up one of the golden calves, but continued to be a place of importance long after the introduction of Christianity, has now reverted to its original state; and, in point of dreariness and solitude, reminds one of the appearance it must have presented

[1] Jeremiah, vii, 20.
[2] Maundrell, p. 107. Stephens says one hour.
[3] Clarke, vol. iv, p. 287.
[4] Maundrell, p. 107.

on the night that Jacob halted here, and "took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows," and lay down to sleep.[1] Somewhere in the neighbourhood, if not in the plain, the city of Bethel must have stood. Several travellers have sought for it in vain. Others have supposed they have found its ruins at a place named Beit-în—a little to the east of the road, on the point of a low hill. The ruins are of considerable extent, and convey to the mind of the spectator no contemptible opinion of the ancient magnificence of Bethel, provided this be indeed its site. There is not a single human being dwelling on the spot, unless, perchance an Arab, who may have come for a few days from some village amongst the mountains, to pitch his tent and pasture his flocks in the neighbourhood of the ruins.[2] Bethel has "come to nought." "I rode among the ruins without dismounting," says Stephens. "The place was solitary and deserted, and not a human being appeared to dwell in it. At one end were the ruins of a church, and near it was a large fountain in a stone reservoir."[3]

Proceeding for about three quarters of an hour,[4]

[1] Genesis, xxviii, 11.—It is pretty well known that the Egyptians were in the habit of using pillows of stone, or of the hardest woods. The Arabs do so to this day. The contrivance of Jacob might not therefore be altogether dictated by necessity.

[2] Prof. Robinson, Amer. Bib. Repos., April, 1839, p. 420.

[3] Stephens, vol. ii, pp. 296, 297.—The position of these ruins agrees with the situation of Bethel as it is laid down by Reland. "Erat sita hæc urbs in via quæ tendit a Jerusalem versus Sichem, et quidem in 12 miliario, uti Eusebius notat in Onom." Again, he says, on the authority of the Jerusalem Itinerary,—"In parte sinistra (viæ a Neapoli Æliam) est villa quæ dicitur Bether (Bethel). Inde passus mille est locus, ubi Jacob cum iret in Mesopotamiam obdormivit."—Palæst. Illust., tom. ii, p. 637.

[4] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 411.

through this desolate country, we come to perhaps the loveliest spot in all Judea,[1] the village of Ainbroot, supposed by some to be the Bethoron of Scripture. It is placed on an eminence, and commands on all sides a prospect of valleys rich and highly cultivated.[2] The hills are covered with the olive and the fig. In the valleys, the corn-fields alternate with vineyards; while the patches of waste ground are overgrown with the beautiful prickly oak and wild flowers. "This spot shines like a gem amid the desolation of Judea."[3] The houses are of one story, and arranged in regular rows on the hill-side. Nothing can be more singular or picturesque in the eyes of a European than the spectacle which the village presents at evening. The inhabitants come forth; and seating themselves on the grassy roofs of their houses, enjoy the delicious sun-set, and the cheering sight of the well-cultivated valleys and terraced hills around them.

At the foot of the ridge on which Ainbroot is built is a village, supposed to be the Lower Bethoron; as that which occupies the summit is supposed to be the Upper. The pass between them is a steep and rugged ascent of some fifteen hundred feet, with a deep valley on either side. "Looking down from Upper Bethoron," says professor Robinson, "a broad valley is seen in the south-west issuing from the mountains and hills into the plain; while on the ridge that skirts its south-west side is seen a village

[1] We use the term in opposition to Samaria and Galilee.

[2] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 297; Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 72.

[3] Physical History of Palestine, chap. v, p. 120. When we mention this work, we beg to bear our humble testimony to the exhaustless information, accurate knowledge, and descriptive power of its author.

called Yâlo, the Arabic form for the Hebrew Ajalon. This then is probably the spot where Joshua, in pursuit of the five kings, having arrived at or near Upper Bethoron, looked back toward Gibeon and down upon the valley before him, and uttered the command—"Sun, stand thou still on Gibeon, and moon in the valley of Ajalon."[1]

Leaving this spot, which appears like an oasis in the wide wilderness of Judea's desolation, our way lies, for sometime longer, through scenery of the same rugged and desolate character as that which we have already traversed,[2] possessing, however, this advantage over the former, that the cultivated spots begin to be more frequently met with, and on such places the crops are most abundant. Here the villages are numerous, hundreds existing which do not appear on the maps;[3] but they are thinly peopled, and their inhabitants live in a state of the utmost wretchedness. Amid these mountains, the iron rod of the Pacha is severely felt. Although the earth yields the richest crops, in return for the pains which are employed in cultivating it, of what avail is the bounty of nature to those who are forbidden to enjoy it. The poor villager has little inducement to engage in cultivation, and is afraid to stir from home, lest he should be impressed as a soldier.

Our approach to the more beautiful country of Samaria is announced by the greater frequency of the cultivation and the numerous streams, which are rendered doubly agreeable by the remembrance of the rocky wilderness through which we have passed.

[1] Amer. Bib. Rep., Series ii, vol. i, p. 427.

[2] Richardson, vol. ii, p. 406.—"The general aspect of the country was particularly wild and barren."

[3] Lindsay, vol. ii, pp. 72, 73.

Descending a mountain, and crossing a brook which runs at its bottom, we quit Judea, and enter the region of SAMARIA. Here, at the distance of eight-and-a-half hours [1] from Jerusalem, opens the beautiful vale of Leban, the Lebonah of Scripture.[2] The valley is long, not less than eight miles, running off to the north. It is bounded on the right and left by stony mountains. The path is shaded in many places by large olive trees; and the streams of pure water which are perpetually met with, often tempt the traveller to dismount. The region, though lovely compared with that through which we have passed, scarcely merits the character of a cultivated country. Still, here and there, on the sides of the mountains, are seen efforts at cultivation truly marvellous; and the result affords proofs altogether surprising of what may be accomplished by industry, when aided by an excellent climate and a soil naturally prolific. The aspect of the country greatly improves as we approach Shechem. "The limestone rocks and stony valleys of Judea," says Clarke, "were entirely covered with plantations of figs, vines, and olive trees."[3] The near neighbourhood of the waste and cultivated grounds, of the naked mountain and the terraced hill, covered with all the luxuriance of eastern vegetation, forms a singular picture of care and neglect, of mingled sterility and richness, which is often met with in this country,[4]

[1] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 73. [2] Judges, xxi, 19.
[3] Clarke, vol. iv, p. 283.

[4] Similar appears to have been the aspect of this region when Phocas visited it in the twelfth century.—"Via est omnis lapidibus strata," says he; "et, licet tota ea regio siccitate arescat, et squalleat, ubique tamen vitibus et arboribus constipatur."—Phocæ Descr. Terr. Sanct., c. 14.

and no where more frequently than in this valley. Following the vale of Lebonah for about three hours,[1] it expands into a magnificent plain, waving with corn. This is allowed on all hands to be the "parcel of ground" which Jacob bought "of the hands of the children of Hamor," and which he "gave to his son Joseph."[2] A stream, which flows from the city of Shechem, waters the plain, making it "so exceeding verdant and fruitful," says Maundrell, "that it may be looked upon as a standing token of the tender affection of that good patriarch to the best of sons."[3]

Turning to the west, we enter a narrow valley, lying between the two mountains Ebal and Gerizim, and leading up to the modern Nablous,[4] the Shechem of the Old Testament and the Sychar of the New. Our track from Jerusalem is the more interesting from the consideration that it is the very same with that by which Christ travelled when "he must needs go through Samaria." At the hour of noon he came to the entrance of the vale of Sychar. "Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well." The first object which meets the eye on entering the valley is the "well of Jacob," on which Christ sat and discoursed to the woman of Samaria of the "living water," of which "whosoever drinketh shall never thirst."[5] "The well is covered at present with an old stone vault, into which you are let down through a very strait hole; and then removing a

[1] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 73. [2] Genesis, xxxiii, 19; John, iv, 5.
[3] Maundrell, p. 106.
[4] A corruption for Neapolis—the new town.
[5] John, iv, 6, 11, 14.

broad flat stone, you discover the mouth of the well itself. It is dug in a firm rock, and contains about three yards in diameter and thirty-five in depth, five of which we found full of water."[1] Proceeding along the valley to the west, Ebal—the mount of cursing—towers on the north; while Gerizim—the mountain of blessing—rises on the south. These hills are of equal height; being from eight hundred to a thousand feet.[2] Ebal is appropriately barren. Gerizim, though not cultivated, has rather a fertile appearance. On the summit of the latter stood, in past ages, the Samaritan temple, referred to by the woman at the well of Jacob when she said—"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain;" and every year it is ascended in solemn procession by the small remnant of the Samaritan people, who still dwell in the city of their fathers.[3] Its summit is crowned at this day by the white dome of the tomb of an Arab saint;[4] while on the north side of the valley, below the shadow of Mount Ebal, lie the bones of Joseph, which the tribes brought with them from Egypt and deposited here, after they had carried them about for forty years in the wilderness; and near to the grave of Joseph are those of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, and Joshua, "the servant of the Lord." Behind them, on the side of the mountain, is a long range of grottos and tombs.[5]

At the bottom of Gerizim stands the town of NABLOUS, the Shechem of Scripture. It is worthy

[1] Maundrell, p. 105.—Stephens also found water in it. Elliot says it was dry when he visited it.
[2] Professor Robinson, Amer. Bib. Rep., Ser. ii, vol. i, p. 428.
[3] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 74. [4] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 302.
[5] Elliot, vol. ii, pp. 391, 392.

of notice, that whilst Capernaum and the other opulent cities on the shores of Tiberias, in which the ministry and the mighty works of Christ were rejected, are now in ruins, and these so greatly defaced that it is scarcely possible for the traveller to ascertain their site, Sychar, where our Lord was kindly received, is still a flourishing town. The charming situation of the city, and the rich beauty of the vale, watered with numerous rivulets,[1] and overshadowed by the twin heights of Ebal and Gerizim, have excited the wonder of all travellers, and furnished them with a theme on which they are never weary of expatiating. Joliffe speaks of the "romantic beauty of its position, the buildings appearing to rise amidst bowers blooming with all the varieties of vegetation, encircled by venerable groves and refreshed by rills of purest water."[2] "Nablous," says lord Lindsay, "was far too lovely for entrance —we rode round the town, and encamped beyond it under the olive trees."[3] "A beautiful stream," says Stephens, "was running through the valley, and a shepherd sat on its bank, playing a reed pipe, with his flock feeding quietly around him."[4] But the finest description of the town and vale of Shechem is the well known one of Clarke: "There is nothing in the Holy Land," says that traveller, "finer than the view of Napolose from the heights around it. As the traveller descends towards it from the hills, it appears luxuriantly embosomed in the most delightful and fragrant bowers, half-concealed by rich

[1] It is popularly said that the valley of Shechem is watered by 365 streams.
[2] Joliffe, vol. i, p. 45.
[3] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 74.
[4] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 304.

gardens and by stately trees collected into groves, all around the bold and beautiful valley in which it stands. Trade seems to flourish among its inhabitants.

"Along the valley we beheld 'a company of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead,' as in the days of REUBEN and JUDAH, 'with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh,' who would gladly have purchased another Joseph of his brethren, and conveyed him as a slave to some Potiphar in Egypt. Upon the hills around flocks and herds were feeding, as of old; nor in the simple garb of the shepherds of Samaria was there any thing to contradict the notions we may entertain of the appearance formerly exhibited by the sons of Jacob."[1]

Leaving Nablous, our course for about an hour lies along a valley as rich and beautiful as that which we traversed in our approach to the town; it is, in fact, a continuation of the same vale. The path is bordered by groves of figs, olives, and almonds, and cooled by a beautiful stream of water which runs beside it. On this rivulet are several little mills, and nothing can be more picturesque than their position. Embosomed among trees, and hidden from the view of the passenger, the rush of the waterfall is often the first intimation he receives of their presence.[2]

Turning to the right, and traversing a mule-track over the rocks, "worn deep by the feet of centuries,"[3] we ascend the hills which divide the valley of Sychar from that of Samaria. These mountains are barren; but after a journey of nearly an hour, we come in

[1] Clarke, vol. iv, pp. 268, 271, 272.
[2] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 310.
[3] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 74.

sight of SEBASTE (Samaria), the royal city of the kings of Israel. Its ruins are seen on a hill, insulated and oval-shaped. We shall have an opportunity afterwards of inspecting more closely the ruins of this once imperial city. At present we attend simply to the disposition and aspect of the grounds adjoining. In the middle stands the oval mount on which Samaria was built, still decked with marble ruins and the traces of its ancient terraces. A valley of the richest green runs round it like a ring; and beyond the valley is a barrier of circling hills, which look as if designed to form a defence around the palace of Israel's monarchs.[1] In allusion to their great fertility, and the abundance of excellent wine which they yielded, the valleys around the ancient Samaria were denominated "the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine."[2] Nor have they at this day wholly lost the "fatness" which tempted their ancient inhabitants to the vice of inebriety, and drew down upon the land the maledictions of the prophet. They are still carefully cultivated by the Arabian peasants; and the neighbouring hills, including that on which the city stood, are almost completely clothed with olives, vines, and fig-trees.

With regard to the province of Samaria, we may here remark, that it has been less frequently visited, and far less carefully examined by travellers, than any other part of the Holy Land; although the fertile and beautiful aspect of the country might have tempted them, one would have thought, to examine it more leisurely. The reason of this great par-

[1] Maundrell, p. 97; Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 75; Elliot, vol. ii, p. 381.

[2] Isaiah, xxviii, 1.

tiality may be easily explained. In the time of Christ, Samaria was inhabited by a foreign race, and consequently this part of the country never became the scene of any of the memorable transactions recorded in the Gospel history, with the exception of that at the well of Jacob. The scenes of Christ's miracles and ministry lie chiefly in the southern and northern provinces; and travellers, finding the rocky hills and vales of Judea more full of interest than the olive-covered heights of Samaria, have contented themselves with hurrying through the latter country along the highway—pausing only to observe and record the beauty of the vale of Sychar, and the melancholy interest attaching to the fallen Samaria—the home of Israel's monarchs—the scene of Herod's grandeur—and now the retreat of the vulture and the jackall. Shaw and Lindsay are the only travellers who have examined, even hurriedly, the country lying between Samaria and the coast. And with regard to the region lying eastward, we know of none save Irby and Mangles who in that direction have penetrated to the Jordan. But the partial glimpses which travellers have obtained of Samaritan scenery, in passing by way of Nablous, warrant us in saying, that this province is at present the most productive part of all Palestine. The valleys are well-watered and fruitful; the hills are lower, better rounded, and less sterile, than those of Judea and Galilee; among its woods the olive is most abundant. Here the animals are numerous; but the region is thinly inhabited by man, a circumstance which arises probably from the fact, that the open character of the country affords less security against the oppression of the go-

vernment. Shaw travelled from Carmel to Samaria, and thus describes the region: "The landscape is every hour changed and diversified by groves of trees, or by the ruins, which are very numerous, of ancient villages. In deviating here from the beaten path, (which we generally did to avoid the Arabs,) we were sometimes obstructed, or at least had difficulty enough to force our way through this rich champaign, which through neglect and want of culture was so thickly planted with the more luxuriantly-growing plants, such as teasels, mullein, charlock, thistles, and the like, that we had much ado to defend our faces from being every moment offended by them. The country begins to be rugged and uneven at Samaria."[1] "In the course of the subsequent journey," says Elliot, who had just entered the Samaritan hills on his way from Galilee, "we saw several black Bedouin tents, and were charmed with the beautifully wooded hills of Samaria, exhibiting scenery so different from that of the mountains of Galilee. Among numerous venerable olive woods, towns and villages are scattered in every direction; and some of the views rival those of Switzerland."[2]

This region, in the times of Israel, was celebrated for the cultivation of the olive and the vine; and the former, we have remarked, is still the most abundant of its woods. The Ephraimites, by whom it was inhabited at the period referred to, carried on a trade with Egypt in oil, the produce of the olive:[3] and when we take into account that the vine was not cul-

[1] Shaw, p. 275. [2] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 380.

[3] Hoshea, xii, 1.—"They (the Ephraimites) do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt."

tivated in Egypt, and that the inhabitants were obliged to use a drink compounded of water and barley, similar to our small beer, it is not improbable that the produce of the vines which grew on the hills of Ephraim was likewise carried to the banks of the Nile.[1] At all events, the vines of this region enjoyed a high character in the neighbouring countries; and the celebrity of the district in this respect is clearly implied in the bold figure of the prophet Isaiah, who compares the proud capital of Samaria, seated on the top of her oval mount, and shedding her glory on the vine-clad hills around, to a crown on the head of a drunkard.

The beauty of the scenery appears to have struck Stephens particularly; we shall sum up all we have to say on the present condition and aspect of Samaria, by a rather lengthened extract from this traveller. "The palace of Herod" (part of the ruins of Sebaste) "stands on a table of land, on the very summit of the hill, overlooking every part of the surrounding country; and such were the exceeding softness and beauty of the scene, even under the wildness and waste of Arabian cultivation, that the city seemed smiling in the midst of her desolation. All around was a beautiful valley, watered by running streams, and covered by a rich carpet of grass, sprinkled with wild flowers of every hue, and beyond, stretched like an open book before me, a boundary of fruitful mountains, the vine and the olive rising

[1] "Vites Ægyptus non habuit," says Reland, "et propterea zytho, potu ex hordeo, veluti nostra regio usa est." For this he quotes the authority of Herodotus. "Οἶνῳ ἐκ κριθίων πεποιημένῳ διαχρέωνται· οὐ γὰρ σφι ἐσί ἐν τῇ χώρῃ ἄμπελοι."—Palæst. Illust., tom. i, p. 381.

in terraces to their very summits; there, day after day, the haughty Herod had sat in his royal palace; and looking out upon all these beauties, his heart had become hardened with prosperity....,.. A fellah was turning his plough around one of the columns; I was sitting on a broken capital under a fig-tree by its side, and I asked him what were the ruins which we saw; and while his oxen were quietly cropping the grass that grew among the fragments of the marble floor, he told me that they were the ruins of the palace of a king—he believed of the Christians; and while pilgrims from every quarter of the world turn aside from their path to do homage in the prison of his beheaded victim, the Arab who was driving his plough among the columns of his palace knew not the name of the haughty Herod."[1]

From Samaria the journey to the plain of Esdraelon is one of about seven hours.[2] We soon quit the territory of Ephraim and enter that of the half tribe of Manasseh. The way for some time lies through fertile and beautiful valleys: the stream which murmurs beside the path, and the occasional shade of an olive, beguile the fatigue of the traveller. About an hour after leaving Sebaste we enter the valley of Jennin, which runs off to the north;—long, narrow, well watered, and where not covered by olive-trees, offering excellent pastures.[3] About mid-way rises the hill on which is situated the castle of Sanpoor, a robber fortress. Clarke describes it as resembling the "old castellated buildings in England," and says, that it has obviously once been a

[1] Stephens, vol. ii. pp. 313—315.
[2] Maundrell, pp. 96, 97. [3] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 305.

place of great strength. To aid its resemblance to the old Norman towers, he was received by a feudal-looking figure, who acted as governor, and whose dress partook largely of the barbaric magnificence of former ages.[1] Descending the hill on which the ruins of this castle are situated, we continue our course along the valley, which is here about two miles in breadth, and after running for about five miles, opens into the magnificent plain of Esdraelon.[2] Some have supposed that this is the valley of Jezreel;[3] if so, we look in vain, on its neglected sides, for the royal palace and gardens of Ahab; nor is it possible to discover the site of the vineyard of Naboth, so intensely coveted, and so dearly purchased by the monarch: long grass or thistles very probably wave over it at this day.

At the north end of the valley, just where it opens into the "great plain," on the western declivity of a hill is the town of Jennin: standing almost on the boundary between Samaria and Galilee. Its aspect is beautiful, especially if approached at sunset; around it are set hedges of the prickly pear, and thus its poverty and filth are hidden by the leaves and blossoms of this beautiful shrub; but no sooner is it entered than the enchantment is dissolved; the ground is occupied by Arab huts, and strewn over with ruins,

[1] Clarke, vol. iv, pp. 263, 265. Since Clarke and others visited it, this fortress has become a heap of ruins.

[2] Clarke, vol. iv, p. 264.

[3] The common opinion is that of Reland, that the valley of Jezreel is the same which is now termed the plain of Esdraelon. "Hæc (Vallis Jizreel) videtur esse eadem cum campo Esdrelon, nunc dicto, et Πεδίῳ μεγαλῳ Εσδραηλων." Palæst. Illust. tom. 1, p. 357. Elliot places the ancient town of Jezreel at Zuraeen in the plain of Esdruelon, a site to which we shall afterwards have occasion to advert.

among which are several objects, which attest the ancient importance and magnificence of the place. Marble pillars, fountains, and even piazzas, still remain in a very perfect state.[1] Without the town are the remains of a Christian convent; the ground around is stony and covered with thistles.[2] If the supposition we have mentioned be correct, that this valley is that of Jezreel, which however is not well supported, this miserable town may very probably be the modern representative of Ahab's capital. But what a contrast between the dwellings of kings, which it is possible once graced the site, and the low, filthy hovels, and squallid beings by whom it is now occupied. The vice, though not the splendour of the scene still remains; the inhabitants are extremely covetous of what is not their own, and all the vigilance of the traveller can scarcely suffice to prevent himself from being robbed.

Immediately on leaving Jennin we enter the PLAIN OF ESDRAELON—named in Scripture the valley of Megiddo, the plain of Jezreel, and sometimes simply "the plain." After travelling long in a hill-country, abounding in valleys no doubt, but these not of great dimensions, the traveller gazes with surprise and delight on this noble expanse. Beyond comparison, it is the finest plain in Palestine, and is truly worthy of the high reputation it has long enjoyed, and the great events which have been transacted on it. "It is impossible," says Wilson, "for language to describe the grandeur of this immense plain."[3] In the division of the land, it fell to the lot of the tribe of

[1] Clarke, vol. iv, pp. 261, 262. [2] Richardson, vol. ii, pp. 416, 417.
[3] Wilson, p. 206.

Issachar, who here "rejoiced in their tents," and at this day the plain is often gay with the numerous encampments and variously-coloured tents of the Bedouins. Entering it at the point we have done, it is seen running off to the Jordan on the east, while on the west it approaches within a few miles of the coast, terminating at the low range of hills which divides it from the plain of Acre. The mountains of Samaria bound it on the south, and those of Nazareth on the north. Its length from east to west is about thirty miles, its breadth from north to south is twenty.[1] Its mountain-barrier contains several objects whose natural beauty is equal to their great historical interest: Carmel in the north-west; from which the swelling mountain-grounds of Samaria and Galilee lead down on either side; but the object on which the eye rests with greatest pleasure is Mount Tabor, in the north-east, standing proudly forward into the plain, as if to challenge the admiration of the traveller: on the south are the inferior chains of Hermon and Gilboa; the hills of Gilead beyond; while afar in the east gleam the perpetual snows of the great Hermon.

The bosom of this great plain is slightly undulating, meeting nowhere, throughout its whole extent, any serious obstruction: no part of its surface is covered with forests; on the contrary, it is so completely open that scarcely a single tree is to be seen. The ground is arable and of the finest quality, and furnishes, whether cultivated or lying waste, proofs of such extraordinary fecundity, that in the opinion of intelligent travellers, the produce of this single plain

[1] Maundrell, p. 96; Clarke, vol. iv, p. 261.

might supply grain sufficient to maintain the whole province of Galilee were it as abundantly stocked with inhabitants as it once was. It is watered by the Kishon, which rises at the foot of Tabôr, and flows westward to the sea; in its ordinary state this is an inconsiderable stream, but as it advances in its course it is joined by numerous mountain torrents, and, on the fall of heavy rains, is apt to have its volume suddenly enlarged; and such appears to have been its state when it swept away the host of Sisera.

The ancient aspect of this plain it is easy to imagine; and certainly nowhere would it have been possible to have found a more extensive or varied scene of beauty and magnificence. Viewed from any of the heights by which it is bordered, it would appear like one vast garden; its bosom waving with rich crops of grain, alternating with beautiful pastures; graced moreover with opulent cities, and villages without number, environed with vineyards, or partially hidden amid pomegranate and orange trees. And then, to relieve the rich though perhaps tame aspect of the middle portion, around it rose a boundary of lofty and terraced mountains: Over all was spread the beautiful sky of Palestine. No wonder that several of the kings of Israel chose it for their residence. But what a change is now visible! and to what is that change to be ascribed? Certainly to no difference in the physical properties of the region; for here is the plain, watered by the river, and bounded by the mountains as of old; its soil as fertile, and its climate as delicious as they ever were: yet what a contrast does its dreary and deserted aspect form to the gay and smiling scene which it ex-

hibited in former times. Again, we ask, to what is this difference owing? To one cause, and to one cause only can it be ascribed. The curse has fallen upon it, "and lo! the fruitful place" is "a wilderness." If the conqueror had swept across it, and laid its cities in the dust, long ere this time they would have been rebuilt, and Tabor, instead of covering with its shadow the solitary tent of the Arab, when the sun sinks behind the hills of Nazareth, would at this day have looked over an hundred flourishing towns, as it did of old. If the poisonous wind of the desert had blown over it, the next spring would have revived its fields, the former and the latter rains would have decked them with a new verdure; but seasons come and go, centuries revolve, yet the beauty of Esdraelon returns not; nor shall it ever flourish again till the winter of the curse has passed, and the spring of the latter-day opened upon the people and upon the land: then shall "the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice."[1] "Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name."[2]

But the present aspect of the plain is what we have chiefly to do with. Accounts, which at first sight appear conflicting, but which on comparison are easily reconciled, have been given of its present condition. Some have seen it waving with corn, others, indeed the majority of travellers, have scarcely been able to perceive the smallest symptoms of cultivation on its entire surface; this difference of statement very probably arises from the plain having been crossed at different points. We conclude from it

[1] Psalm xcvi, 12. [2] Psalm lxxxix, 12.

that Esdraelon at present contains some cultivated ground, but that the greater part of its surface is lying neglected. It is "of a vast extent," says Maundrell, "and very fertile, but uncultivated; only serving the Arabs for pasturage."[1] "On this extensive plain," says Hasselquist, "but little of which is cultivated, the Arabs sometimes fight their battles."[2] Clarke says, that "though a solitude," he found it, "like one vast meadow covered with the richest pasture."[3] "I journeyed along the field,' says Wilson, "which appears a solitude:....from those parts, however, which have been ploughed up, the soil affords proofs of its fertility."[4] Burckhardt, than whom no one is less guilty of using exaggerated language, says, that it is "almost entirely deserted."[5] Such is the present aspect of this celebrated plain; its inhabitants are gone, its cities are perished, the mountains around are barren, and though some portions are tilled and sown, these bear a small proportion to the vast extent of surface lying neglected, covered in some places with thistles, but more generally with rank grass, on which the Arabs pasture their flocks.

The historical renown of this plain is very great. Not improperly has it been termed "the battle-ground of nations;" and how often has its soil been moistened with other showers than the dews of Hermon. Here Sisera mustered his host; while the swollen and impetuous Kishon swept them away to bury them, like the ancient Egyptians, beneath the waves.[6] Here fell the good Josiah, mortally wounded by an arrow

[1] Maundrell, p. 95.
[2] Hasselquist, p. 156.
[3] Clarke, vol. iv, pp. 255, 256.
[4] Wilson, p. 206.
[5] Burckhardt, p. 334.
[6] Judges, iv, v.

as he fought with the king of Egypt:[1] and here a nation met to mourn the fall of the pious prince—"the mourning of Hadadrimmon, in the valley of Megiddon."[2] Over this plain came the Dove of Babylon to lay waste Judea;[3] and here too, in the latter days of the Jewish state, when final vengeance was about to be inflicted on the nation, were seen the eagles of Rome. And since that day how often has it been a field of battle! the crescent and the cross have gleamed on it by turns, not as symbols of peace, but as ensigns of war. The soldier of Europe has here mingled his shout with the terrible war-cry of the Saracen. In the words of Dr. Clarke, which every writer on this celebrated plain has accounted it his duty to quote, "Jews, Gentiles, Saracens, Christian Crusaders, and antichristian Frenchmen, Egyptians, Persians, Druses, Turks, and Arabs, 'warriors out of every nation which is under heaven,' have pitched their tents upon the plain of Esdraelon, and have beheld the various banners of their nations wet with the dews of Thabor and of Hermon."[4] And certainly it would not be easy to point to a more magnificent natural theatre on which war might marshal its terrors: nor does it appear that the history of this plain is in this respect closed; while we write the fleets of Britain are hanging on its border, and the armies of continental Europe, and of western Asia are assembling in its neighbourhood. The issue it is impossible to predict, but we trust the

[1] 2 Chronicles, xxxv, 22—25. [2] Zechariah, xii, 11.
[3] The Babylonians carried a dove as their standard.
[4] Clarke, vol. iv, p. 258.

ancient miracle of Carmel will be renewed: that the cloud which is gathering in the same quarter where it rose of old, shall, after its darkness has been dispelled, and its thunders are over, descend in refreshing showers on a land which has long lain withering beneath the twin influences of tyranny and superstition. In fine, prophecy points to this plain as the place where the great battle of Armageddon is to be fought[1]—the last and terrible conflict between the armies of Antichrist and the followers of the Lamb.

Before crossing the plain, and entering the mountains on its northern side, on our way to Nazareth, let us go westward, and examine several valleys of considerable scriptural note, lying between Esdraelon and the coast. Arriving at the western limits of the plain, the hills of Samaria and Nazareth, by which it is bounded, approach so as almost to meet, leaving only a narrow outlet, through which the Kishon flows to the sea:[2] traversing this pass, we find ourselves in the VALE OF ZEBULON. Here in ancient times dwelt those who, as Deborah sang, "handled the pen of the writer." The valley is about four miles in length, by one in breadth.[3] The soil is exceedingly fertile, but its fertility is turned to little account. Cotton is sometimes reared on it. It is almost uninhabited, and its general state is that of a rich waste. To Clarke it appeared "every where covered with spontaneous vegetation, flourishing in the wildest exuberance."[4] The surrounding hills are well wooded, chiefly with oak, and a few beeches.[5]

[1] Revelations, xvi, 14, 16. [2] Maundrell, p. 94.
[3] Robinson, vol. i, p. 243. [4] Clarke, vol. iv, p. 131.
[5] Hasselquist, p. 153.

Leaving this fertile but neglected spot, we pass by another narrow valley into the PLAIN OF ACRE. The view which here bursts on the traveller is truly grand: in front, at the distance of about five miles, is the wide expanse of the Mediterranean; in the south is the beautiful promontory of Carmel, its base chaffed by the waves; the noble bay, and the tall elegant minaret of Acre diversify the scene; while on the north, running up along the coast, and bounded by the hills of Nazareth on the east, is the fertile plain. This plain, on the authority of Maundrell, is eighteen miles in length, by six in breadth: towards the shore the soil is sandy, but inland it is said to resemble the black loam which the Nile deposits. The numerous streams by which it is watered, the shelter it enjoys on the north and east, and its delightful exposure to the south-west wind, all tend to render it eminently fertile; a fertility however which the ignorant and oppressed race who inhabit it know not how to improve. Maundrell calls it "delicious," but says that it is "now almost desolate; being suffered, for want of culture, to run up to rank weeds, which were, at the time when we passed it, as high as our horses' backs." [1] It is truly melancholy to reflect that hundreds in the city of Acre are dragging out a half-starved existence, while the fine plain around is lying almost wholly uncultivated. "Over an extent of several miles," says Stephens, "we would perhaps see a single Arab turning up what on the great plain appeared to be merely a few yards." [2] Nor is it ignorance and idleness mainly which restrain these wretched beings from availing themselves

[1] Maundrell, p. 89. [2] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 353.

of the means of subsistence which nature has accumulated in such abundance around them; the terror of the Egyptian despot is still more effectual in checking all attempts at cultivation. The plain lies open; any one who chooses may till and sow it, but it shall infallibly happen that one man will reap. The harvest comes, and with it duly comes the tax-gatherer: this functionary surveys the crop of the poor Arab, and in the name of his government seizes, not a stipulated portion, but as much as he needs; and the question there, as Stephens remarks, is not, "how much he shall take, but how little he shall leave."

Leaving the coast, and returning into the interior, we ascend the hills which bound the plain of Acre on the east. Pursuing a track a little more northerly than that by which we came, we descend into the VALE OF ABILENE, the characteristic of which is a wild beauty like that of all the valleys in this rich district.[1] It is a narrow stripe of ground; with a high bottom, and a boundary formed of low hills wooded chiefly with oak.[2] Crossing the hills on the east of this valé, and traversing again the northern part of the fertile valley of Zebulon, we ascend the hills which enclose it on the east, where we meet the ruins of the ancient Sapphura, or Zippor. This city, once the capital and bulwark of Galilee, the seat of the Jewish schools, and one of the monuments of Herod's vast wealth and munificence, is now represented by a miserable village, around which, in the shape of broken columns and sarcophagi, are

[1] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 81. [2] Robinson, vol. i, pp. 204, 243.

strewn the memorials of its past splendour. [1] Descending the hills on which the ruins are situated we find ourselves in the VALE OF SEPPHORIS. This valley is very similar, both in respect of extent and physical characteristics, to that by which it is bordered on the south-west—the vale Zebulon. It is between three and four miles in length; and a single glance over its surface, covered with luxuriant and wild vegetation, is sufficient to convince the spectator that the soil is deep and rich. The inhabitants are famed for the cultivation of bees, which feed on the numerous wild flowers of all sorts which beautify its fields in the early part of the season. [2] It is interesting to observe that as we approach the region in which Christ lived—for we are now only three hours' distance from Nazareth—we find the inhabitants clothed in the same form of dress with that which he wore: a large upper garment composed of camel's hair, formed out of one square piece, with holes for the arms. It is commonly made with a seam down the back, but if without a seam it is accounted more valuable. [3] In this garment, which is still worn by the inhabitants of the region of Nazareth, it is almost certain that we behold the materials as well as the form of that robe for which the soldiers cast lots at the foot of the cross; and which we are told was "without seam, woven from the top throughout."

Immediately on leaving the vale of Sepphoris, the aspect of the country alters very much for the worse, and the remaining portion of the journey to Nazareth is performed on a stony road, leading over sterile

[1] Clarke, vol. iv, pp. 133, 134; Lindsay, vol. ii, pp. 81, 82.
[2] Hasselquist, p. 153.
[3] Clarke, vol. iv, p. 157.

limestone hills.[1] The prospect soon becomes one of unbroken sterility. The traveller looks around; but as far as the eye can reach, he beholds not only "uncultivated but uncultivatable lands."[2] Amid scenery of this description, he approaches the city in which Jesus dwelt. It is not our intention to proceed farther by this route than the vale we have already indicated; we shall therefore return to the plain of Esdraelon; and after crossing that great valley, we shall penetrate through the hills which bound it on the north, and approach Nazareth from the south. This will allow us to add a little to what we have already said regarding the geographical features, and the present physical aspect of this celebrated part of the Holy Land.

Our route across the plain, which is almost due north, is accomplished in seven hours. On our way we pass the remains of several of the opulent towns which once flourished here. Among others we may mention those of Meroz, on whom the curse was pronounced by the angel, because her inhabitants "came not forth to the help of the Lord." These sites are completely ruined, speaking generally,—fountains, sarcophagi, and fragments of ancient sculpture lying scattered about, are the only remains of their former magnificence. They appear to have stood on small eminences, a well-chosen position in an agricultural district. The inhabited villages which occupy some of these ancient sites are in general poor, and peopled entirely by Mohammedans.[3] At a distance on the south-west edge of the plain are seen the villages of

[1] Clarke, vol. iv, p. 155. [2] Buckingham, vol. i, p. 141.
[3] Buckingham, vol. ii, pp. 379—382.

Ta'annuk and Lejyun, corresponding to the ancient Taanach and Megiddo,[1]—in all probability the part of the plain where the battle with Sisera was fought; for these towns are celebrated, in connection with Sisera's discomfiture, in the song of Deborah,—"Then came the kings and fought; then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo."[2] A little to the east of our route at the foot of Hermon are the modern representatives of Nain and Endor. As an instance of the apparently conflicting accounts which have been given of this plain, we may mention that Monro affirms that it is "well cultivated."[3] Buckingham, a more careful observer, says—"The whole of this extensive space is covered with a fine red soil..... It is now, however, lying waste, excepting only a few patches ploughed for cultivation, towards its southern edge."[4] It is "thinly inhabited," says Richardson, "and not half cultivated or stocked with cattle."[5] Up to the visit of professor Robinson in 1838, it does not appear that the eastern part of this plain was ever accurately described or correctly laid down on the maps. We shall therefore quote that part of his valuable report which relates to this district of Palestine. "Two mountain ridges run out into it (plain of Esdraelon) from the east, commencing near the brow of the Jordan valley, and extending westward to near the middle of the plain. The southern ridge is Gilboa, the northern is the Little Hermon of Jerome. They divide the east-

[1] Professor Robinson, Amer. Bib. Rep., Ser. ii, vol. i, p. 428.
[2] Judges, v, 19.
[3] Monro, vol. i, p. 278.
[4] Buckingham, vol. ii, p. 384.
[5] Richardson, vol. ii, p. 418.

ern half of the plain into three parts, of which the northern and southern decline towards the west, and their waters flow off to the Kishon, while the middle portion, between Gilboa and Hermon, slopes to the east; and its waters descend to the Jordan through a broad valley or plain at Bisan, the ancient Bethshean. Jezreel stood on the southern brow of this central valley, in which are copious fountains. One of these is now called Jalûd, the Tubania of the crusaders, and doubtless the ancient fountain of Jezreel." [1]

We now proceed to Nazareth, a distance of two hours. Leaving the plain, we begin our ascent over the mountains by which it is bounded on the north. Having gained the summit of these rocky eminences, we descend into a narrow defile, which leads in a north-west direction between two steep hills. Although the country here is entirely neglected as regards cultivation, it is in some places tolerably clothed with wood, especially with stunted oaks. We pursue our way through the defile, and next ascend a rocky mountain, from the summit of which we look down into the vale of Nazareth.[2] This is merely a large hollow amongst the mountains. It is formed like a cup, being almost as perfectly circular and as completely shut in, from the manner in which the hills are ranged round it. On the lowest acclivity of the western ridge is seated the little white town, which gives its name to the vale.[3] Below the village in the valley is a copious spring of water, denominated the "fountain of Mary." As the situa-

[1] Prof. Robinson, Amer. Bib. Rep., Series ii, vol. i, p. 429.
[2] Buckingham, vol. i, p. 157; Robinson, vol. i, p. 211.
[3] Buckingham, vol. i, p. 146.

tion of a spring is not liable to change, and as the females of the country have perpetuated the ancient custom of going thither to draw water, it may be readily granted, that in all likelihood this fountain has often been honoured by the presence of the person whose name it now bears. Behind the town is the lofty and precipitous hill over which his townsmen designed to cast Jesus.[1] When one looks down into the vale, the soil of which might bid defiance to agriculture[2]—the sides of the enclosing hills barren, with a few straggling fig-trees—we are tempted to renew the ancient question—"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Its present aspect is such as to justify the application of the prophet's description of Christ to the vale in which he passed his youth—"a root out of a dry ground. He hath no form nor comeliness."[3] "Rocks and barrenness appear on all sides," says Elliot. "The eye, like Noah's dove, wanders about, finding no cultivation and no tree to rest upon."[4] Here the vine does not yield her cluster nor the olive her shade, nor does nature wear that beautiful mantle of rich green with which she covers some of the neglected spots of this land. It is not the eye but the heart which must here seek for gratification; and however barren, it will always be a hallowed spot to the Christian; for in the deep seclusion of this vale grew up "the Rod from the stem of Jesse."

From Nazareth, the road to Cana winds over

[1] Lindsay informs us that the accumulation of rubbish at the bottom of the precipice appears to have greatly diminished its height.—Vol. ii, p. 83.

[2] Clarke, vol. iv, p. 164.

[3] Isaiah, liii, 2.

[4] Elliot, vol. ii, pp. 365, 366.

chalky hills, and through valleys very scantily cultivated. After travelling for an hour and a half in a north-east direction, we come in sight of the village, pleasantly situated on a gentle eminence facing the south-west.[1] Beneath the village flows a copious spring of the purest water. Pomegranate and olive-trees wave over the spot; and the traveller, taking advantage of the cool shade which they offer, generally halts here at noon. Leaving the fountain, we begin our ascent to the village. As we slowly wind our way up to the little town, we think of the "marriage in Cana of Galilee," graced by the presence of the Saviour. Amongst the ruins of the place are still to be seen stone pots, of a kind similar to those which contained the water on which Christ operated, when he gave the first display of his almighty power. These pots are not preserved as relics; they are lying about, disregarded by the inhabitants, who are ignorant of their original use. "From their appearance," says Dr. Clarke, "and the number of them, it was quite evident that a practice of keeping water in large stone pots, each holding from eighteen to twenty-seven gallons, was once common in the country."[2] It was no doubt the practice of the females of Cana eighteen hundred years ago, as it is at this day, to repair to this well; and it is not improbable that this spring yielded the water which the Saviour turned into wine.

We must here confess our inability to proceed farther in the direction in which our route has lain generally since we left Jerusalem, that is, due north.

[1] Robinson, vol. i, p. 238; Clarke, vol. iv, p. 185.
[2] Clarke, vol. iv, p. 188.

At Cana we lose the benefit of all our guides. There is no city of any importance north of this town, nor indeed any spot of great Scriptural celebrity; and travellers, on reaching this point, turn off to the coast, or proceed eastwards to the banks of the Jordan. Of the country lying between us and Lebanon, nothing can be given but the most general description. Like that through which we have already passed, it is composed of hill and dale, the valleys are small, wooded in some instances, and yielding crops of grain in others. The inhabitants of this district, living more out of the reach of the oppression of their rulers, have more encouragement to cultivate the soil, and are in consequence more contented and wealthy.

CHAPTER VIII.

VALLEYS AND PLAINS NORTH AND EAST OF JERUSALEM.

Begin our journey through the valley of the Jordan—Springs of the Jordan—Character of the valley south from Banias—Lake Merom—Journey to shores of Gennesareth—Saphet—Ancient burial-place of Jews—Pit of Joseph—Plains of Dothan—Mount of Beatitudes—View from it—Outline and general appearance of the lake of Gennesareth—Circuit of its shores—Plains of Gennesareth—Ruins of towns—Tiberias—Aspect of the lake from this point—Jewish cemetery—Southern extremity of the lake—Plain along its eastern side—Gamala, or city of the Gadarenes—Return to the head of the lake—Contrast between its present and past state—Description of the Ghor by Burckhardt—Character of the plain south to Jericho—Plains of Gilgal—The Jordan—Swellings of Jordan—Passage of the Israelites—Annual procession of pilgrims to bathe in the river—Ancient fertility of the plain of Jericho—Present barrenness and insalubrity—Approach to the Dead sea—Various names of this lake—Well known to the ancients—Clothed by them with imaginary horrors—Description by Josephus and Jerome—Dimensions, as stated by moderns—Saltness—Buoyancy—Colour—Evaporation—Bitumen—Birds fly across it—Apples of Sodom—Descend along its western shore—Wells of Bitumen—Drift timber—Mountain of Salt—Southern shore—Zoar—Superfluous waters how disposed of—Results of Mr. Costigan's examination of this lake—Question regarding the formation of the Dead sea—Burckhardt's supposed discovery that the Jordan once flowed through El Araba to the Red sea—This shown to be impossible—Proof that the Dead sea does not owe its existence to the de-

struction of Sodom and Gomorrah—New theory regarding the plain on which the cities stood—Supported by the geographical structure of the region—By the history of the overthrow in Genesis—Concluding reflections.

We now enter on our fourth and last stage. We shall place ourselves beneath the snowy summits of Lebanon, at the head of the great valley of the Jordan, through which we mean to proceed southwards, examining on our way the many celebrated spots which it contains. Our journey commences at the springs of the Jordan, by far the largest and most celebrated river in the Holy Land. We shall not enter at any length into the question regarding the true source of this river—a question of small importance and not easily determined. A little to the north-east of the city of Banias, the Cæsarea Philippi of the Romans and the Dan of the Jews, on the western side of the Djebel-el-Shiek (Mount Hermon,) is a spacious cave, from which issues a large body of water. This was commonly regarded by the ancients as the source of the Jordan. Over the cave is a perpendicular rock, with a large niche hewn in it, which there is little doubt was anciently occupied by a statue of the god Pan, as it is immediately above the source of the river; and as the name of the god was borne both by the city and mountain, the former being called Panias and the latter Panium. Around the source of the river are scattered the supposed fragments of the temple which Herod built here in honour of Augustus.[1] Even so early as the times of Josephus, it began to be questioned whether the cave at Banias was indeed

[1] Burckhardt, pp. 38, 39.

the true source of the Jordan. This historian mentions a lake, fifteen miles off, on the sides of Hermon, circular as a cup, hence called Phiala or the vial, always full of water, yet having no outlet, which then began to be reckoned the real source of the river; and he mentions a story which, were it well authenticated, would certainly prove that this lake was better entitled than the cave to the honour of being considered the true source of the Jordan—that Philip the tetrarch having put some straw into the lake Phiala, it came out at the cave of Banias. This lake was first discovered in modern times by Irby and Mangles; for the lake which Burckhardt visited, and which he named the Birket-el-Ram, is certainly not the Phiala of Josephus. "We saw on our left," says Irby and Mangles, who were at that time descending the western slopes of Hermon, "close to us a very picturesque lake, apparently perfectly circular, of little more than a mile in circumference, surrounded on all sides by sloping hills richly wooded. The singularity of this lake is, that it has no apparent supply or discharge, and its waters appeared perfectly still, though clear and limpid: a great many wild-fowl were swimming in it."[1] This description, as well as the position of the lake with respect to Banias, quite agrees with Josephus; and there can be no doubt that this is the Phiala of the ancients. Modern geographers, however, are disposed to reject both the lake and the cave, and to seek for the infant Jordan amongst the numerous springs which flow from the foot of Hermon and

[1] Irby and Mangles, p. 287.

Lebanon. At present it is not determined whether this honour ought to be awarded to the rivulet discovered by Irby and Mangles, which rises a little beyond the lake of Phiala, and unites with the Jordan at Banias,[1] or to the stream which rises at Hasbeya, and which forms at once a large bason of beautifully clear water. Being confined by a piece of sloping masonry, the stream dashes in a wide sheet over the barrier, forming a fine cascade. Buckingham tracked this stream great part of the way, though not to its junction with the Jordan. It is the most remote of all the springs by which the river is fed: it soon becomes a considerable stream, and according to some, pursues an independent course to the Lake Houle (Samachonitis).[2]

From Banias we now set forward on our journey. The plain we are now traversing is bounded on both sides by a chain of hills. The eastern range is the highest, and is backed by the great Hermon, the snows of which form the real source of the river which rolls through the valley. The country is beautifully wooded for about two miles: next comes an open and rich plain, watered by numerous rivulets, abounding in swamps, covered in some places with luxuriant grass, and in others with thistles, so tall as almost to overtop the traveller. A few spots are under cultivation, and these yield crops of wheat and

[1] Irby and Mangles, pp. 286, 287.

[2] Buckingham, Arab Tribes, pp. 397, 400.—Those who wish to pursue this investigation may consult, besides the authorities we have named, the 'Physical History of Palestine,' chapter vi, which contains a pretty lengthened statement of the comparative merits of the different streams which unite to form the Jordan.

barley equal to any in the plain. The valley is here about twelve miles broad, and its character continues the same to Lake Houle, a distance of fifteen miles from the head of the valley.[1]

The Bahr-el-Houle, to which we have now come, is known in the Old Testament as the waters of Merom. This lake is formed by the stream of the Jordan, which here spreads itself out, so as to cover a considerable part of the plain; or rather, it may be viewed as the point where all the various streams which form the Jordan meet, and from which they are all sent out southward along the valley in one united stream. Its length, according to Josephus, is seven miles, its breadth between three and four. Professor Robinson says it is from eight to ten miles long; but he adds—"the northern half being a mere tract of marsh, covered with tall reeds or flags,"[2] there is nothing to prevent us supposing, that during the heat of summer the northern half becomes completely dry—a circumstance which would reduce its dimensions to those which Mariti assigns to it. The shores of the lake are covered with reeds and rushes. At a greater distance are fruit-trees, so thickly set as to seem a forest: their cool shade would invite the traveller did not beasts of prey frequently lodge amongst them.[3] The plain on the north of it appeared to Irby and Mangles to be literally covered with wild geese, ducks, widgeon, snipe, and water-fowl of every description.[4]

Beyond Lake Houle the enclosing mountains con-

[1] Irby and Mangles, p. 290; Buckingham, Arab Tribes, p. 405; Richardson, vol. ii, p. 449.

[2] Amer. Bib. Rep., Series ii, vol. i, p. 430.

[3] Mariti, vol. ii, p. 362. [4] Irby and Mng

tract, and leave only a narrow valley, connecting the basin of the lake we have just mentioned with that of Tiberias, to which we are approaching. To this part of the plain the following description of Richardson applies:—"We resumed our march, which lay once more along the venerable banks of the river Jordan, over a fine undulating plain, amply covered with weeds and thistles; but the ground is susceptible of any species of cultivation..... During the whole of its course, the Jordan is bounded by a chain of mountains on each side. On the east they rise up almost precipitously from the bed of the river. On the west there is a fine fertile vale, averaging about half, or three quarters of a mile broad, between the river and the mountain. This does not apply to the lake of Gennesareth; for there the mountains are close to the lake on each side,[1] with here and there a small beautiful vale opening in the west. The mountains on the east are bolder, and continue with little interruption all the way. On the west side, along which we travelled, the interruptions are frequent, and charming defiles, irrigated by small streams of water, pass off."[2]

On leaving Lake Houle, the stream of the Jordan is rapid, the descent being considerable; but after a run of eight miles its flow becomes smoother, and the river is shaded on both sides by plane trees.[3] A journey of three hours along its banks brings us to the shores of a noble lake—the celebrated Gennesareth. The mountains here expand so as to form an

[1] This is not altogether accurate, as we shall afterwards show. In the time of Richardson, the eastern shore particularly of that interesting lake had not been well examined.

[2] Richardson, vol. ii, pp. 443, 444. [3] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 91.

ample basin for the waters, and running along their sides, appear to form a bold and lofty barrier all round them. The physical loveliness of the region is almost entirely gone, still it possesses great grandeur of outline; and one may easily imagine the mingled scene of beauty and sublimity which it exhibited in better times, when the plains and hills around were richly cultivated, and thickly studded with opulent cities. But of its great historical splendour it can never be deprived. The sight of these blue waters and swelling hills recalls to the memory and to the heart the miracles of power which were here performed, and the words of mercy to which it resounded in other days. Nor is there any thing here to break in upon the solemn meditations to which the mind delights to surrender itself. The soft flow of the Jordan, the still expanse of the lake, the deep repose of the mountains, the breeze so faint as to be scarcely able to move the long grass on the plain, the sun perhaps settling away to the west, and projecting the bold outline of the hills on the bosom of the waters, —the whole forms one of the noblest pictures of still life which is anywhere to be seen.

Before entering on any description of the lake, it is necessary to attend to several objects of great celebrity in the neighbourhood. If we turn to the north, we behold the mountains rising in successive ridges, and growing at last into a pyramidal hill, overtopping the whole. Nearly on the summit of this eminence is seated the town of Saphet. Ascending thither we are obliged to climb hill after hill; and the longer we continue to toil upwards, the city only appears to rise the higher, and to detach itself

the more from all surrounding objects. On the north the ascent is performed through a country abounding in vines and almond trees. Having gained the summit, we look down on the surrounding region. On the hills both east and west of the Jordan, the plain of Esdraelon in the south-west, the lakes Merom and Gennesareth, the one immediately on the north and the other on the south of the mountain, while part of the plain of the Jordan, adds to the beauty of the scene. The elevation of the place is great, its atmosphere pure and cold; but its situation renders it liable to heavy rains. The houses are of mud, ranged in successive rows on the highest slope of the hill; and being flat, the roofs of the houses of one street serve as a thoroughfare to the inhabitants of the other.[1] Saphet is ranked by the Jews, along with Hebron, Jerusalem, and Tiberias, as one of their holy cities. From every part of the continent of Europe, and from Africa, the Jews resort hither, to die and be buried beside their fathers. Of a population of six thousand, fifteen hundred are Jews. In a valley at a little distance, and visible from the town, are the white sepulchres of Meiron. Here, as the Jews believe, the prophet Hoshea is interred. Here is the dust of some of the more eminent of the Tanaim—the compilers of the Talmud. This too is the resting-place of countless thousands of Israelites, some of whom lived before the Christian era; but the great

[1] An inhabitant brought an action against a fellow-citizen for breaking through the roof of his house, as he was passing along one day with his mule heavily laden; and was met by a counter suit for the value of the animal, whose leg was fractured owing to the roof not being of sufficient strength.

majority, like the present Jewish occupants of Saphet, have wandered hither from the most distant regions of the earth. The sepulchres which compose this cemetery are large, deeply hewn in the rock, and covered with immense stones. The Jews from the town often resort to these tombs, passing whole nights amongst them; and beside the ashes of his fathers the voice of the living Israelite is often heard ascending in prayer. When Stephens was here, it happened to be the last day of unleavened bread. Towards evening, the whole Jewish population came forth on the roofs of their houses in gay and beautiful costumes—the women with their ornaments of gold and silver on their heads—to enjoy the delicious hour of twilight. When the shades of night gathered round the hill, and the gay spectacle had vanished, the voice of psalms, rising from the Jewish dwellings, fell solemnly on the ear of the traveller. During the late war, the Jews of Saphet were severe sufferers, death being the mildest of the calamities which befell them.[1]

We descend the sides of the mountain towards the lake, through grounds uncultivated and destitute of trees. At two hours and a quarter is Djob Yousef —the supposed pit into which Joseph was let down by his brethren, and out of which he was again drawn, to be sold to the company of Ishmaelites. The well is shown in a court-yard belonging to a khan, situated on the high-road from Damascus to Acre. It is about three feet in diameter, and at

[1] The authorities consulted for this account of Saphet are—Maundrell, p. 483; Burckhardt, p. 317; Irby and Mangles, p. 291; Stephens, vol. ii, pp. 335—338; Elliot, vol. ii, pp. 351—356; Jewish Expositor, vol. x, p. 339.

least thirty in depth. Its sides are lined with masonry. Its bottom is hewn in the rock, and its waters are said never to dry up—a circumstance which rather militates against the supposition that this is the pit into which the favourite son of Jacob was let down.[1] This is still the highway of the merchant from Gilead who has occasion to go down to Egypt; and whether the well we have described be the scene of the transaction referred to or not, there can be little doubt that we are near the plains where the young Hebrew was doomed to experience how cruel and treacherous the heart of a brother could become; and we can easily imagine, that glimpses of the beautiful scenery around would often visit the captive in his dungeon, and might prompt the affecting appeal, "Think on me when it shall be well with thee; for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews."[2] When the events referred to took place, the sons of Jacob were here feeding their flocks; and Richardson bears his testimony to the pastoral character of the country at this day. "We got," says he, "upon an extensive open field, which bore an abundant crop of thistles, and on which several herds of black cattle were feeding, attended by their keepers."[3]

Advancing towards the lake, the eye is attracted by a peculiarly shaped hill, which rises in the south. Its irregular outline has been compared to the back of a camel.[4] This is the mount of Beatitudes, where, as is supposed, Christ delivered his memorable sermon. It rises in a high plain, but is itself of

[1] Burckhardt, p. 318.
[2] Genesis, xl, 14, 15.
[3] Richardson, vol. ii, p. 443.
[4] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 357.

no great height—perhaps three hundred feet.[1] Situated a little west of the shores of Tiberias, it must have formed a convenient resort to the inhabitants of the towns and villages adjoining the lake, on the occasion referred to. Let us ascend the mountain and survey the prospect it commands, rendered interesting from the reflection that the same objects must have been before the eyes both of the speaker and his audience; for however much its appearance eighteen hundred years ago may have exceeded in richness and beauty the aspect it exhibits at this day, the great outlines of the scene remain the same as when the towns and villages of Galilee poured out their inhabitants to hear the great duties and sanctions of the Law vindicated, and the great doctrines and promises of the Gospel published for the first time to the world on this mount. The lake slept immediately below, while afar in the south-west rose the conical top of Tabor. In the north girdled the hills of Galilee, with Saphet perched upon their highest summit, suggesting to the speaker, when reminding his disciples of the distinction which their character conferred, and the circumspection it required, the apt illustration—"a city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."[2] The windings of the Jordon through the valley on the north would add beauty to the scene, while the snowy tops of Hermon and Lebanon in the back-ground would give it grandeur. And was it here that the waters of life were a second time opened to the world by the Son of God, after they had been sealed up by human tradition? Was it here that the voice of the Great

[1] Wilson, p. 221. [2] Matthew, v, 3.

Speaker was heard saying,—"Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"? Alas! how long shall it be ere these valleys again resound with the gospel of peace, and the feet of them who bring good tidings be seen upon these mountains.

Let us again place ourselves on the northern shore of the lake of Gennesareth. This interesting body of water is fifteen miles in length and six in breadth. It is known in the Old Testament as the "sea of Cinnereth"[1] from a town of that name which stood upon its banks; the evangelists call it the "sea of Galilee," the "sea of Tiberias," and sometimes the "lake of Gennesareth," by which name it is still known.[2] Before describing its more minute features, let us attend to its general outline, and the impression which its appearance makes upon the traveller. The place where we stand is a rich plain, of about a mile in breadth, running along the northern shore. This plat is watered by numerous rivulets, which cover it with so luxuriant herbage that its pastures are proverbial in the neighbouring countries. A fountain of fresh water gushes forth at our feet, and over head a large fig-tree spreads her branches to protect us from the noon-day heat. At a little distance off, on the east, are the supposed ruins of Capernaum, and beyond them the Jordan is seen entering the lake.[3] In front the lake is spread out calm as a mirror—the water sweet, cool, and clear as the

[1] Numbers, xxxiv, 11.

[2] The Hebrews were accustomed to call any large inland body of water a sea, as the Arabs still do. Those of the evangelists who were native Jews, call it a sea. Luke, who was a Greek, calls it a lake.

[3] Burckhardt, p. 319.

purest crystal. From this point the eye stretches across its whole length, and can perceive the southern shore, with the Jordan leaving it, to pursue its course to the Dead sea. The mountains range along its sides, both on the east and west, running down in many places quite to the water's edge. On the east they do not impend in frowning cliffs over the lake, as has sometimes been stated, but are rolled in swelling masses backwards from the shore.[1] In the west they are of lower elevation, but rugged and barren, and approach nearer to the lake.[2] The aspect of the region varies at different seasons: in winter, and after the rains, the hills are green and verdant, but destitute of trees; in summer their herbage is burnt up by the long drought, and their appearance is dull and melancholy. The mountains on the west are well stocked with wild animals. Antelopes are very numerous. These beautiful quadrupeds are often seen feeding among the thistles and tall herbage of the valleys.[3] The flow of the Jordan through the lake may be distinctly traced from the top to the bottom, by the greater smoothness of that part of the surface, its run creates a motion in the waters perceptible to the very edge. The usual state of the lake is that of a profound calm, liable, however, to be suddenly broken by severe tempests; at times gusts and squalls descend on it from the mountains; or the wind blowing strongly from the south-east, and meeting the current of the Jordan, raises a very high sea. Descending towards it from the mountains, its appearance is said to be more imposing than when viewed from the

[1] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 331. [2] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 90.
[3] Clarke, vol. iv, p. 209.

plain. Such was Dr. Clarke's position when he first saw it, and we may quote part of his description as a good example of the impression which the lake of Gennesareth makes upon the traveller. "The wind rendered its surface rough, and called to mind the situation of the Saviour's disciples, when, in one of these small vessels which traverse these waters, they were tossed in a storm, and saw JESUS in the fourth watch of the night, walking to them upon the waves. Often as this subject has been painted, which combines a number of circumstances favourable to a sublime representation, no artist has been aware of the uncommon grandeur of the scenery memorable for the transaction. The lake of *Gennesareth* is surrounded by objects well calculated to heighten the solemn impression made by such a picture; and, independently of the local feelings likely to be excited in its contemplation, it affords one of the most striking prospects in the *Holy Land.* It is by comparison alone that any due conception of its appearance can be communicated to the minds of those who have not seen it; speaking of it comparatively, it may be described as longer and finer than any of our Cumberland and Westmoreland lakes, although it be perhaps inferior to Lochlomond in Scotland. It does not possess the vastness of the lake of Geneva, although it much resembles it in some points of view. In picturesque beauty it comes nearest to the lake of Locarno in Italy, although it be destitute of any thing similar to the islands by which that majestic piece of water is adorned. It is inferior in magnitude, and perhaps in the height of its surrounding mountains, to the lake Asphaltites; but its broad

and extended surface, covering the bottom of a profound valley, surrounded by lofty and precipitous eminences, when added to the impression under which every Christian pilgrim approaches it, gives to it a character of unparalleled dignity." [1]

We shall now perform the circuit of the lake for the purpose of describing its shores, especially the plains on the north and west, termed the country of Gennesareth, and celebrated by Josephus as unrivalled in point of soil, climate, temperature, and beauty of of scenery. Our station hitherto has been on the northern plain. This is a rich and luxuriant waste, "entirely uncultivated and neglected," says Stephens, "except in one place, where an Arab was ploughing a small plot for tobacco." [2] How often must the Saviour have crossed this plain, seeing the towns in which his mighty works were performed, Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, stood in its neighbourhood; the path at this day is overgrown with long grass, bushes, and reeds. Proceeding along the meadow, we reach the western shore of the lake, and turn to the south. Crossing the point of a rocky ridge, which runs down into the lake,[3] we again enter on a fine plain running in a south-west direction along the shore, and watered by several rivulets which descend from the mountains; at the head of the plain, at some distance from the shore, is a small mound of crumbling bricks, the presumed ruins of Bethsaida, and farther off, among the hills, are those of Chorazin.[4] Pursuing our way to the south, we come to another cliff of basaltish rock, running boldly into the lake.

[1] Clarke, vol. iv, pp. 209, 210.
[2] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 330.
[3] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 329.
[4] Ibid., vol. ii, p. 330.

Crossing this promontory, the direction of the shore changes from south-west to south-east; in the angle formed by the change of direction, stands the miserable village, El Medjdel; supposed to be the ancient Magdala.[1] This plain, like those we have traversed, is excessively fertile, but entirely neglected; it is covered, according to Lindsay, with the rankest vegetation, reeds, nebbek-trees, oleanders, honeysuckles, wild-flowers, and splendid thistles in immense crops."[2] While such are the productions of the land, Elliot gives the following account of the tenants of the air and the waters: "The feathered tribe seem to choose this neighbourhood as a favourite resort. Multitudes of storks were congregated on the banks; the water was covered with wild ducks; and numerous vultures were assiduously engaged with their carrion prey."[3] This brings us to the bottom of the plains of Gennesareth. Crossing a third projection of the mountains,[4] we arrive, after a short journey, at Tiberias. This town was built by Herod, and, being designed for his residence, it could boast of distinguished magnificence. It stands on a small plain on the shores of the lake, surrounded by mountains, which impede the westerly winds, and render the situation of the town extremely unhealthy. Like every Turkish city, it has an imposing appearance at a distance; but on entering it you find nothing but filth, poverty, and misery. The walls, which are strong, and defended by bastions, in good condition, are in the form of a triangle, but the space within is not half covered with houses. The most conspicuous

[1] Burckhardt, p. 320.
[2] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 89.
[3] Elliot, vol. ii, pp. 347, 348.
[4] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 329.

object in the city is the mosque, from the minaret of which the muezzin daily proclaims the hours of prayer. The inhabitants amount to about four thousand, of whom about one fourth are Jews.[1] This part of the population have a distinct quarter of the town assigned them, close on the shore. It is enclosed by a wall, with only one gate of entrance, which is regularly closed at sunset, after which no one is admitted. The site of the ancient Tiberias may still be traced by the granite columns and other remains with which the shore is strewed for a mile to the south of the modern town. Mariti has given a very gloomy description of this town: "Had not the serenity of the sky rendered it almost impossible for me to be deceived, I should have imagined, when I entered it, that I was descending to the habitation of the dead, as its walls are built of brown iron-coloured stones, like those which the poets say compose the palace of Pluto.....On one side you see ruins half buried in the earth; and on the other some shattered edifices converted into huts. About a hundred shadows, who, I was told, were the inhabitants of the place, flock with great eagerness around the traveller, whom they survey with an air of astonishment that is little calculated to inspire him with confidence." [2] [3]

At Tiberias, one important feature in the scenery of the lake comes into view. Behind the hills which form its eastern boundary, at a great distance in the north-

[1] Burckhardt, p. 322. Elliot estimates the Jews only at three hundred. [2] Mariti, vol. ii, p. 174.

[3] According to every traveller, this town swarms with vermin, being distinguished in this respect above all the cities in the East. It is a common saying that the king of the fleas has his court at Tiberias. "If so," says a traveller, "his subjects must be very numerous."

east, is seen mount Hermon, appearing to the traveller like a pile of pure snow,—the mount Blanc of Syria. The narrow plain on the west of the town is cultivated by the inhabitants. The climate is so warm that almost any tropical plant might be reared, but the only produce of their fields are wheat, barley, dhoura, tobacco, melons, grapes, and a few vegetables.[1] Continuing our journey along the shore, we find the plain running back for half a mile to the mountains, which are filled with sepulchral caves,[2] the burial place of the ancient town. The Jewish cemetery is in this quarter, for Tiberias is one of their holy cities; and Burckhardt was informed that a great rabbin is here interred, with fourteen thousand of his scholars around him. In less than an hour we arrive at the celebrated warm baths.[3] Going still to the south, we cross the Jordan a little below where it issues from the lake. The beach here is a fine gravel of quartz, strewn with a small white shell; the water is deep close in shore.[4]

It was long supposed that there was no road along the eastern shore; that the mountainous cliffs projected into the lake so as to forbid all passage. Lindsay has shown that this is a mistake: "There is," says he, "as beautiful and easy a footpath along the whole eastern shore of the lake as across a meadow in England.[5] Proceeding northwards, along the fine rich meadow which runs all the way between the mountains and the water's edge, nothing worthy

[1] Burckhardt, p. 323.
[2] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 344; Buckingham, vol. ii, p. 366.
[3] Buckingham, vol. ii, p. 367. [4] Burckhardt, p. 276.
[5] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 89.

of observation meets the eye till we come within a few miles of the head of the lake. Here the mountains, which had hitherto run on our right, fall back and leave a large oblong valley between their base and the shore. In this valley rises a steep insulated hill,[1] displaying on its top the ruins of a place of immense strength, and great splendour—El Hussn. This, in all probability, is the city of the Gadarenes, where our Lord wrought the cure on the demoniacs; the rocky sides of the mountain appear to have been scarped angularly for defence; the summit is covered with grass and trees, among which are still to be seen the remains of a citadel, baths, wells, and granite columns; and on the brow of the hill stands an ancient massive gateway. The face of the mountain on the south contains numerous tombs; the same, in all probability, out of which came the men "possessed with the devil," who met Christ on his arrival in this part of the country. These are the only tombs on the east of the lake, near to the shore; and what strengthens the probability that they are the same with those which formed the dwelling of the demoniacs, is the fact, that the high road from the lake of Gennesareth to the country on the east, runs through the valley immediately below, a circumstance to which Matthew seems to refer when he states that the fury of the "possessed" rendered them so dangerous, "that no man might pass by that way."[2] On the west the mountain

[1] Burckhardt, p. 279.

[2] Mat. viii, 28. The extensive cemeteries on the east of Oom Keis have hitherto been considered the scene of the miracle. But this is an inland town, two hours' journey to the south-east of Gennesareth, and if we advert to the occurrence which followed

runs down in steep declivities to the sea, in all likelihood the "steep place" down which the herd of swine rushed violently when the devils entered into them.[1] [2]

Passing on to the north, the fine rich meadow continues all the way to the head of the lake. We have now returned to the spot whence we set out. Let us pause here for a little and review our journey. We have gone round the lake, without meeting a single human being, or a place of habitation save the miserable town of Tiberias; we have traversed the fine plains, covered in the time of Josephus with palms, figs, and fruit trees of all kinds, and where there was a "happy contention of the seasons, as if every one of them laid claim to this country," [3] and seen them producing only rank grass, thistles, and bushes. We have walked over the site of opulent cities, and found only a broken column or a mass of crumbling brick to tell us of their former grandeur; we have looked up to the sides of the mountains and had the heart saddened by their dull and withered aspect; we have examined the surface of the lake, without finding a single boat of any description upon its waters; we have listened for the voice of man, but a profound silence reigns every where, not broken save perchance by the ripple of the wave upon the strand. We feel that the "land is empty," "that the Lord hath removed men far away, and there is a

the miracle—that of the swine, which were feeding obviously on the borders of the lake—it will appear absurd to suppose that the miracle was performed here.

[1] Lindsay, vol. ii, pp. 93—95.

[2] Both Burckhardt, and Irby and Mangles mention that herds of wild swine are found in the neighbourhood at this day.

[3] Wars of the Jews, book iii, chap. x.

great forsaking in the midst of the earth." The following little picture, from Stephens, expresses this feeling completely; he was looking forth upon the lake from amidst the ruins of Capernaum. "Not a habitation," says he, "not even an Arab's hut, is seen upon its banks,[1] not a solitary boat upon its waters. A single pelican was floating at my feet, and, like myself, he was alone. He was so near me that I could have hit him with a stone; he was the only thing I saw that had life, and he seemed looking at me with wonder, and asking me why I still lingered in the desolate city."[2]

Had we performed this journey eighteen hundred years ago—in the time of the Saviour—what a different scene would have met the eye. Then our way would have lain amidst palaces and cities and towns, the seats of busy men—the royal Tiberias, the strong Magdala, the crag-built Gamala, the doomed Capernaum, with her sisters, Chorazin and Bethsaida, and others equal in splendour, but whose names are now perished with their ruins. Here, too, we would have seen the magnificence of art rivalled by the beauty and richness of nature; the shore waving with luxuriant crops, or graced with groves of palm-trees and plantations of figs; the bottom of the mountains covered with gardens, and the higher slopes shaded with olives or verdant with rich pastures; the surface of the lake, too, exhibiting a scene of life and animation from the multitude of fishing boats and merchant vessels on its waters, and

[1] There are one or two miserable Arab villages on the banks of the lake, but these might not be in the view of Stephens at the time.

[2] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 332.

passengers continually going and returning from the towns which stood upon its shores. The whole region vocal, moreover, with many happy sounds, the rush of its hundred rills, mingling with the song of birds and the lowing of cattle. But now this scene of beauty and joy is vanished, and nothing is seen save a lonely lake reposing amid bare and melancholy mountains.

We shall now leave the lake of Tiberias, and proceed southwards along the valley of the Jordan. The distance from this point to the Dead sea is sixty-five miles. The general term employed by the Arabs to designate this part of the valley—we mean that which lies between the two lakes—is El Ghor; its breadth at the bottom of the lake of Tiberias is about six miles,[1] but as it advances to the south it widens considerably. The position, aspect, and character of this plain, will be best conceived of from the following extract from Burckhardt. "It is one of the lowest levels in Syria—lower than the Hauran and Djolan by nearly the whole height of the eastern mountains; its temperature is hotter than I had experienced in any other part of Syria, the rocky mountains concentrating the heat, and preventing the air from being cooled by the westerly winds in summer. In consequence of this higher degree of heat, the productions of the Ghor ripen long before those of the Hauran. Barley harvest, which does not begin in the upper plain till fifteen days later, we here found nearly finished. The Hauran, on the other hand, was every where covered with the richest verdure of wild herbage, while every plant in the Ghor was already dried up,

[1] Burckhardt, p. 3 4.

and the whole country appeared as if in the midst of summer. Volney has justly remarked that there are few countries where the changes from one climate to another are so sudden as in Syria; and I was never more convinced of it than in this valley. To the north was the Djebel-el-Shiek (Hermon) covered with snow; to the east the fertile plains of Djolan (Gilead), clothed in the blossoms of spring; while, to the south, the withered vegetation of the Ghor seemed the effect of a tropical sun." [1]

The great fertility for which the valley of the Jordan was celebrated in ancient times appears to have been owing, not so much to a productive soil, as to the warmth of its temperature, and the numerous rivulets which descend from the mountains. Its springs are still abundant; but the hand of man no longer guides them along the plain; and the consequence is, that they form pools of stagnant water, and nourish only a luxuriant growth of wild herbage. The other parts of the plain are burnt up with the drought, and have the parched appearance of a desert.[2] As we pursue our course to the south, we pass the ruins of several towns; these contribute, in no small degree, to the insalubrity of the place; the foundations of the houses, which still remain underground, stop the passage of the springs, occasion pools and marshes, from which, owing to the great heat of the climate, a vapour arises prejudicial in the highest degree to health. The only remains of the great thoroughfare which must once have existed between the cities on the south of Judea and the numerous towns on the plain, and the country of

[1] Burckhardt, pp. 274, 275. [2] Ibid. p. 344.

Gennesareth, is a single Roman mile-stone, with only a few letters legible on it, and a little beyond, part of the pavement of the ancient road.[1] Passing through numerous Arab camps, we reach Bysan—the ancient Bethshan—to the walls of which the bodies of Saul and his sons were affixed after the fatal battle of Gilboa. The soil in the neighbourhood of the city is entirely of marl; there are few trees; but wherever water is found the reeds are abundant.[2] On the east side of the Jordan, from the lake of Tiberias, south to a point opposite Jericho, the plain abounds with the ruins of cities; the same may be affirmed of the tract on the west of the river, which stretches from Tiberias south to Bethshan; but from Bethshan south to Jericho no ruins are visible, the valley here being full of rocks, and little susceptible of cultivation.[3] This fact corroborates, in a surprising manner, the statement of Josephus regarding this part of the plain, that it was "uninhabited by reason of its barrenness.[4] The whole of this tract is overhung on the west by a chain of calcareous rocky heights, which begin at Bysan, and run south to the Dead sea. These hills, which were noticed by Burckhardt,[5] are no doubt the "barren mountain" of which Josephus speaks in his description of this valley, and which, according to him, had their rise at the land of Scythopolis (Bysan), and extended on the south to the country of Sodom.[6]

[1] Irby and Mangles, p. 301. [2] Burckhardt, p. 344.
[3] Burckhardt, p. 345. Note.
[4] "Wars of the Jews," book iv, chap. viii, sect. 2.
[5] Burckhardt, p. 347.
[6] "Wars of the Jews," book iv, chap. viii, sect. 2.

We have now come to Jericho. We reserve the consideration of the site and aspect of this city to a following chapter, we speak at present of the condition of the lands around it. The space between the western hills and the river is here about six miles in breadth; nearly in the middle of this space stands the little village of Richa; the plains between it and the Jordan are those known in Scripture as the plains of Gilgal, where the camp of Israel was first pitched on entering Canaan, and where the tribes "did eat of the old corn of the land." [1] The soil is fertile; and, amid the vast uncultivated regions lying around, crops of wheat and barley are still found growing here.[2] The present fertility of the district looks as if nature loved to show herself bounteous to the fields which were the first to minister bread to the chosen people on their entering the land.[3]

We have hitherto travelled along the Jordan without noticing that hallowed stream; as we have now arrived at the point where it was crossed by the Israelites when they took possession of Canaan, it appears proper that we should stop here, and give a brief description of this celebrated river. Issuing from the foot of Hermon, it pursues its course to the south along the great valley of Syria, passing through the lakes Merom and Gennesareth, and emptying itself at last into the Dead sea, whence it finds no outlet. As it proceeds onwards, sometimes with

[1] Joshua, iv, 19, and v, 11. [2] Monro, vol. i, p. 138.

[3] It is mentioned that the people ate both of the old corn and the parched, that is, the new. The former they might find in the granaries, which the people would abandon on their approach; the latter might be got in the fields, either standing or newly reaped, for they entered at the time of barley harvest.

a rapid motion and a murmuring noise, at other times with a smooth and silent flow, its stream, which is considerable at first, is greatly augmented by numerous rivulets which descend from the hills of Galilee and Judea on the one side, and from those of Gilead and Abarim on the other; so that the volume of water which it daily rolls into the bitter ocean at its bottom is very great. Shaw computed its breadth, where it enters the Dead sea, at thirty yards, and its depth at three; and estimating the average rate of its flow at two miles an hour, he concluded that its daily discharge of water would amount to upwards of six millions of tons.[1] As it nears the lake, its windings become more numerous, "as it were," says Sandys, "to delay his ill destinie."[2]

The breadth of the valley is here about fifteen miles, and the course of the Jordan lies nearly in the middle, having on the east the plains of Moab, bounded by the range of Abarim, with Nebo looking over the valley. The plains on the west are still more desolate than those on the east, and are bounded by the high mountains of Judea. Approaching the Jordan, we come first to a shallow valley of nearly a mile in breadth; descending into it, we find its bottom covered with long grass, tall reeds, oleanders, tamarisks, and low brushwood.[3] Making our way through the thickets, we arrive at the stream, which we find flowing between banks of sand "with-

[1] Shaw, p. 346. We should reckon this estimate of its discharge low enough. It is well known that the average flow of great rivers is *three* miles an hour, but Shaw only allows *two* for that of the Jordan, which, considering the rapidity of its stream in some places, is too small. The rate of its motion, however, where it disembogues, may be lower than that of its average flow.
[2] Sandys, p. 141. [3] Burckhardt, p. 344; Monro, vol. i, p. 140.

out bloom or verdure."[1] From a height of perhaps fifteen feet, we look down on its clear and pure waters, and can distinctly perceive the pebbly bottom over which they roll.[2] It breadth, at any point where we may happen to visit it south of Jericho, will be found to be much the same as where it enters the Dead sea, from eighty to an hundred feet. In January, when the river is at the lowest, its waters are found generally from ten to fifteen feet below their banks; but in May, when the snows begin to melt on Hermon, the stream overflows, and covers the whole of the lower valley, but never rises so high as to encroach upon the upper plain. On these occasions the panthers, tigers, and other beasts of prey which haunt its jungles, are dislodged by the stream; and the figure of the prophet may be seen verified, "a lion from the swelling of Jordan." The earlier travellers, who did not visit it at the proper season, were surprised at what they conceived its shrunk dimensions, and doubted whether the Jordan now overflows his banks as he did of old time;[3] but later visitors, having gone at the proper season for seeing the river in its ancient grandeur, have ascertained that the Jordan still observes its periodical overflowings. Professor Robinson visited the river on the tenth of May, "It was now the time of wheat harvest in the valley," says he, "and we found the river, as of old,

[1] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 261.

[2] Buckingham, vol. ii, pp. 90, 93. This statement regarding the transparency of the waters of the Jordan is to be understood as applicable only to parts of its course. Nearer the Dead sea its stream is turbid. Lamartine says it is mixed with grey earths.

[3] "We could discern no sign or probability of such overflowings," says Maundrell, who visited it in March.—p. 133. March

overflowing the banks of its ordinary channel." [1] Lord Lindsay, who was here in July, after the period of overflow, found that the waters had retired within their usual limits; but the "upper bed," he tells us, "was still moist from the floods." [2]

Three thousand years ago, the banks of the stream at this point were the scene of memorable events.

An invisible hand held back its rolling floods, and while its waters were gathered in heaps above, "the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan," and the tribes passed over and entered on their promised possession.[3] On this plain the bannered host assembled; and as they gazed around on the teeming beauty and fertility of the region, they must have felt that all was indeed true which Jehovah had spoken regarding "the land flowing with milk and honey." Behind them was a noble river, which rolled its waters with joy along their ancient channel now that the "ransomed of the Lord" had passed over; on either hand was a vast plain, stretching out almost beyond the eye, laden with grain, for it was "the time of harvest;" in front was a range of olive-covered hills, and at their bottom were seen the towers and battlements of Jericho, gleaming through palm-trees. Here too, at the beginning of the Gospel, events of great interest took place. At Beth-abara, the house of passage, John began to

is too early for the melting of the snows on Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon.

[1] Amer. Bib. Rep. Series ii, vol. i, p. 420.

[2] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 64. Observe how this confirms the Scripture history. When the Israelites passed it, it was the time of barley harvest, and "Jordan overflowed all his banks."

[3] Joshua, iii.

baptize, and to proclaim to the multitudes who thronged the banks of the Jordan from "all Judea and Galilee," "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world;" and it is probable that at this spot Christ submitted to the rite of baptism at the hands of his harbinger. In memory of these events, and from an idea that a greater degree of holiness attaches to this part of the river than to any other, it is annually visited, at the time of Easter, by all the pilgrims who happen to be in Jerusalem; and it is difficult to say whether folly or superstition be more conspicuous in the scene that is here enacted.

The procession is composed of persons of all ages, sexes, and nations—the lively Greek, the grave Oriental, the dark Copt, and the fair Russian; every beast of burden in Jerusalem is pressed into the service—horses, asses, mules, and camels; the young and aged are carried in panniers, slung on either side of an animal; those who are unable to provide the means of conveyance, are obliged to walk on foot; but of all others, *he* is accounted the happiest person who performs this journey mounted on the bare back bone of a horse or donkey, "sharpened by a perpetual fast." The company generally amounts to five thousand; mule-drivers, Arab soldiers, a few Frank travellers, and crowds of moslems, who go to deride the "infidels," swell the numbers, and enliven the appearance of this motley assemblage. Escorted by a powerful body of Turkish cavalry, they leave Jerusalem, wind slowly round the heights of Olivet, traverse the rugged pass through the eastern mountains, and arrive on the plain of Jericho at the hour of

twilight. Here they encamp for the night. A starry vault is spread out over the plain—clear and calm; the waving summits of the mountains run along the horizon on either hand; but the grotesque scene exhibited on the bosom of the plain, it is impossible to describe—the braying of asses, the neighing of horses, the shout of revellers, the discharge of fire arms, the screams of children, the sound of musical instruments, such are the elements which compose this singular scene, whose thousand discordant noises are re-echoed by the surrounding mountains, while the plain gleams afar with the light of innumerable torches. Sleep visits few eyes among the vast multitude. At the earliest dawn the encampment is broken up, and the pilgrims, putting themselves in order, commence the procession to the banks of the Jordan. Here a new scene ensues; the whole company undress, rush into the river, and those who are borne down by the crowd, or carried away by the force of the stream, are left to their fate. Some may be seen drinking the sacred waters, others pouring them on their head, others plunging below the surface; some standing praying, others assisting the aged to creep into the river, mothers immersing brawling infants, whilst along the banks rides the Turkish governor, with his suite, regarding with supreme contempt a scene which is not worthy of being beheld with any other feelings. The company return to the shore, their sins washed away, as they superstitiously believe; and their ablutions being over, the robe in which they were performed is carefully preserved for the purpose of enveloping their bodies after death.[1]

[1] Elliot, vol. ii, pp. 460—479; Monro, vol. i, pp. 140—143; Stephens, vol. ii, p. 290.

From this spot the Dead sea lies at the distance of about two hours to the south; let us proceed thither, examining the character of the country as we go along. This is the part of the plain commonly known in Scripture as the valley of Jericho, of which the ancient writers have left us such glowing descriptions. Justin, who describes it as it existed a little after the time of the Saviour, says, that it is a valley like a garden, environed by continual hills, which enclose it like a wall, containing two hundred thousand acres, and famous for its woods, especially its palm-trees and opobalsams.[1] With this agree the accounts of Josephus, who, speaking of this valley, says, "There are in it many sorts of palm-trees, that are watered by it (the fountain of Elisha), different from each other in taste and name; the better sort of them, when they are pressed, yield an excellent kind of honey, not much inferior in sweetness to other honey. It also bears that balsam which is the most precious of all the fruits of that place; cypress-trees also, and those that bear myrobalanum.....It will not be easy to light on any climate in the habitable earth that can well be compared to it—what is here sown comes up in such clusters. The ambient air is here also of so good a temperature, that the people of the country are clothed in linen only even when snow covers the rest of Judea"[2]—so renowned of old was the desolate tract we are now traversing. It is still watered by the river and enclosed by the mountains; but the banks of the one are no longer shaded by the palm, nor the sides of the other clothed with the

[1] Palæstina Illustrata, tom. i, p. 383.
[2] "Wars of the Jews," book iv, chap. viii, sec. 3.

olive. The skill and industry which could turn to account the natural advantages which the valley enjoys, in point of position and climate, are not now to be found in Judea. The plain contains the ruins of several cities, Jericho, Ai, and others, whose names are lost; but there is not more than one inhabited place in it, and the miserable beings who occupy the site are devoured by vermin and wasted by fevers. One solitary palm waves over the modern representative of the ancient city of palm-trees.[1] The balsams have been extinct for ages. A continual haze is found in its atmosphere, causing a sort of twilight in the plain, and acting as a covering in concealing somewhat the desolation of the country. It is possessed solely by the Bedouins, some of whom regard it as their patrimony,[2] others visit it only in winter, when its herbage is green after the rains. No part of it is cultivated, save the fields which are supposed to form the ancient Gilgal; it is lying waste, or overgrown in many parts with a species of thorn, and that, though it be easy of tillage, warm and delightful in point of climate, not infertile as regards its soil, and capable of extensive irrigation from the fountains near Jericho.

As we proceed to the south, the face of the plain is covered with a dark-coloured earth, which might be taken for the rich deposit of a river, did not its sterility undeceive the traveller, for it nourishes

[1] Amer. Bib. Rep., Series ii, vol. i, p. 420.

[2] "It is certainly a very marked peculiarity of the Arabs that inhabit this valley of the Jordan, that they have flatter features, darker skin, and coarser hair than any other tribes; a peculiarity rather attributable, I conceive, to the constant and intense heat of that deep region than to any other cause."— Buckingham, Arab Tribes, pp. 15, 14.

nothing save a few desert plants, and appears to labour under the curse by which the cities of the plain were overthrown.[1] Advancing farther, the ground is strewed with a powdery substance, having the appearance and the taste of salt mixed with sulphur.[2] All signs of vegetation cease; long narrow hillocks of sand[3] stretch across the plain, traversing which, in half an hour, we arrive on the shores of the Dead sea.

This region still bears the frightful traces of the terrible judgment inflicted on it nearly four thousand years ago; in many respects it is the most impressive monument of the divine vengeance which exists any where on the earth. A profound silence reigns over it day and night; and no one ever yet approached its shores, or gazed on its dark and sluggish waters, without thinking of the guilty cities which lie buried beneath them, righteously overthrown by Heaven.

This lake is known in Scripture as the "Salt sea," and the "Sea of the Plain." By the Greek and Roman writers, it was called the "Lake Asphaltites." Among the Arabs it is known as the "Bahr Loot," the sea of Lot; but the most appropriate name is that which the moderns commonly give it, though the term is not, as some have supposed, of modern origin, the "Dead sea."[4]

[1] Monro, vol. i, p. 146.
[2] Chateaubriand, vol. i, p. 341; Elliot, vol. ii, p. 480.
[3] Maundrell, p. 136.
[4] Galen, the physician, who explored in person this sea, gives it this name: Τὸ δὲ σῆς ἐν Παλαιστίνῃ Συρίᾳ λίμνης ὕδωρ, ἣν ὀνομαζουσιν οἱ μὲν Θάλασσαν νεκρὰν, οἱ δὲ λίμνην Ασφαλτιτιν, ἐστι μὲν καὶ γευομένοις οὐχ' ἁλυκὸν μόνον ἀλλα καὶ πικρόν. And after a more lengthened account of its properties, its great weight, its buoyant power, he proceeds to give the reason of the name, viz., that when fishes happen to be carried down into it by the Jordan they quickly

The ancients have given a very accurate description of this remarkable lake. In this respect they are not excelled—some may think they are not equalled—by the moderns; living on its shores, or in the neighbouring countries, they had opportunities of making themselves fully acquainted with it which we do not possess. In the Greek pages of Aristotle, Galen, and Strabo, in the Roman annals of Tacitus, and in the letters of Pliny, we find as full an enumeration of its physical properties—its extent, its saltness, its bituminous nature, its buoyant power; and as faithful a portraiture of its gloomy and terrific features as in the pages of the latest traveller. It is true they clothed it with many imaginary horrors, of which the moderns have stript it. They placed upon its shores the memorable pillar from which our Lord borrows the brief but emphatic warning, "Remember Lot's wife;" they planted around it the apples of Sodom, so striking an emblem of Sodom herself, whose beauty was quickly turned into ashes; they filled it with horrid noises, and covered it with a pestiferous vapour, fatal to birds that attempted to fly across it; in fine, they banished absolutely from its neighbourhood the sight and sound of living thing. But in truth, the lake stands in no need of such gloomy embellishments; the death-like aspect communicated by its barren shores and dark hills, and,

die. lib. iv, cap. 16. An Arabic writer, Scherif Ibn Idris, quoted by Reland, gives the same account of the name: "Pervenit usque ad mare Zegor (Zoar) quod appellatur mare Sadum et Amur (Sodomæ et Gomorræ) quod hæ urbes fuerint gentis Loth, quas Deus submersit, et in earum locum successerit mare fœtidum. Appellatur autem mare mortuum, quia nihil in quo anima est ibi invenitur, nec piscis, nec reptile, nec aluid quidpiam quod in reliquis aquis generari solet."—Palæst. Illust. tom. i, p. 249.

above all, the solemn associations with which it fills the mind, render it sufficiently impressive and awful, independently of such terrors as have no foundation in nature, and are idle and superstitious.

Among the ancients Josephus may be accounted the person best acquainted with this lake, as he lived in the neighbourhood, and may be supposed to have given all that was known of it among the natives. We shall therefore give the substance of what he states regarding it, adding such particulars as have been contributed by the moderns towards the physical history of the Dead sea, which, even to this day, has not been well explored.

Its length, according to Josephus, is five hundred and eighty furlongs, and its breadth is a hundred and fifty. He describes its shores as barren, its waters as bitter, and of so great gravity that they bore up the heaviest things which were thrown into them; and such, says he, was their power in this respect, that when Vespasian ordered some men, who could not swim, to have their hands tied behind and to be thrown into it, they floated on its surface. He speaks of it changing its colour three times a day,[1] and vomiting forth huge masses of bitumen, which he compares in shape and size to headless bulls.[2] Jerome, who lived long in Bethlehem, and may be supposed to have visited the lake, in his commentary on the forty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, states that the lake had no fish of its own, and that such as were brought down by the Jordan immediately died.[3]

[1] "Jewish Wars," book iv, chap. viii, sect. 4.

[2] The changes of the sky, and of the light reflected from the hills, may account for this.

[3] Palæst. Illust. tom. i, p. 244.

What we have given from Josephus and Jerome contains the substance of all that has been stated regarding the Dead sea by ancient writers, keeping out of view what we must regard as mere embellishments or exaggerations.

Its dimensions are variously estimated by the moderns as well as by the ancients; the statement on which we place greatest reliance is that of professor Robinson, who estimates its length at fifty miles, and its breadth at twelve.[1] It is enclosed on the east and west by mountains, dark, precipitous, and lofty—by those of Judea on the right, and of Moab on the left. The plain of Jericho bounds it on the north; on the south it opens into the desert of Edom. Its shores, speaking generally, are absolutely barren, as are the mountains which overhang them; its waters are bitter and nauseous beyond those of the ocean. They hold in solution one fourth of their weight of various salts, and owe their great capacity of supporting bodies to this large infusion of foreign matters.[2] "I could have lain there and read with perfect ease," says Stephens, "in fact, I could have slept." "It requires," says Paxton, "an effort to keep the feet and legs under, so as to use them with

[1] Amer. Bib. Rep. Series ii, vol. i, p. 419.

[2] The water of this lake has been subjected to chemical analysis, and found to contain the following proportion of salts to one hundred grains of water:

Muriate of lime, ...	3·920
Muriate of magnesia, ...	10·246
Muriate of soda, ...	10·360
Sulphate of lime, ...	0 054
	24·580

Its specific gravity, assuming common water at 1·000, is 1·2110. A density unknown to other water.

advantage in swimming." The water of the lake, when viewed *en masse* has a "sombre livid tint," which may be partly owing to the character of the neighbouring scenery; for, to one standing on the shore, the pebbles at the bottom are distinctly visible; but it cannot be doubted that this colour belongs in part also to the water itself, for, when received into a vessel, it is not perfectly transparent, but objects viewed through it appear as if seen through oil. The air above the lake is generally clear; but the intense heat of the valley produces an abundant evaporation, which is often seen, especially in the morning, hanging above the water in the form of a thick fog. Irby and Mangles, on approaching the Dead sea, from the south, saw the evaporation rising "in broad transparent columns of vapour, not unlike water-spouts in appearance, but very much larger." Phenomena of this kind would appear unusual and extraordinary to the ancients, who inhabited a dry and clear climate, and formed no doubt the "mist and darkness" which they speak of as covering the lake, and which, in their view, rendered it a fit emblem of the place of eternal punishment. The shore on the north is low and sandy, the sand being very unlike that of the Mediterranean, not bright, but of a dark dirty brown; pebbles are sometimes found in it, obviously of a bituminous nature, for, when held to the flame of a candle, they ignite. On this part of the shore brush and drift-wood are sometimes seen, but more frequently on the southern side. Huge masses of bitumen float about in the lake, and when driven on shore by the winds they are collected by the natives. This trade is as old at least as the times of Josephus

and Diodorus Siculus, both of whom have given a description of the manner of collecting it in boats on the lake. With regard to the origin of the bitumen found so abundantly in this sea, the Arabs told Burckhardt that it exudes from the cliffs which impend over the eastern shore, and, becoming detached from the mountain, rolls down with terrific noise into the lake. We are rather disposed to seek a different origin for this substance. Before the destruction of Sodom the plain "was full of slime pits," that is, wells of bitumen, and there is nothing impossible in the supposition, that these wells may be still in action at the bottom of the Dead sea, and thus sending their produce to the surface; the subterranean fires which caused them to overflow with liquid bitumen in the days of Abraham, may not yet be extinguished. It does not seem easy, on any other supposition, to account for the great abundance in which the lake produces this article. This, moreover, agrees with the account of Josephus, who says of the lake, that "it casts up black clods of bitumen."

The fable of the ancients, that birds attempting to fly across this sea dropped dead into its waters, killed by its pestilential air, has been amply disproved by modern observers. Maundrell saw birds flying about and over it. When Mariti was there the swallows were skimming its surface; Irby and Mangles saw upon its shores a mass of dead locusts; and whilst they were speculating whether the atmosphere of the lake were not fatal to animal life, they beheld first a "pair of Egyptian geese," and afterwards a "flight of pigeons" cross it. Stephens saw a "flock of gulls" launch boldly forth upon its

bosom; and Elliot watched the flight of some wild ducks from Moab to the hills of Judah. Professor Robinson, in fine, heard the song of the lark, and the cheerful whistle of the quail among the dark rocks near its southern shore, while birds of prey were soaring and screaming in front of the cliffs above." But it is not surprising that the ancients fell into this error; for the truth is, that the entire want of vegetation in the neighbourhood of the lake, unless on the south east, and in the middle portion of the western shore, prevents birds or animals of any kind from being frequently seen near it.

With regard to the fabled apples of Sodom, nothing has ever been discovered growing on these shores which answers in all respects the description which the ancients have left us of this celebrated fruit, but one of the vegetable products of the valley comes very near to it. The plant we refer to is called the *ösher*, and grows abundantly on the declivities on the south and south-west. Burckhardt describes it as "a fruit of a reddish yellow colour, about three inches in diameter, which contains a white substance, resembling the finest silk, and enveloping some seeds." A substance of this sort received unto the mouth, would be felt something like ashes. Irby and Mangles were surprised to find it on the southern shore of the lake "grown to the stature of a tree." And professor Robinson, who also saw it, says it "corresponds best to the ancient descriptions of the apples of Sodom."

If we pass south along the western shore, we meet in some places wells of bitumen still flowing, this substance contributes to the fertility of the soil, and

the rank vegetation which exists around these pits conceals them from our view till we are quite on their brink; in the same manner we may suppose them to have been concealed from the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, and their followers, who "fled and fell there" when pursued by Chedorlaomer and his confederate kings. On many parts of the shore is drift timber of all kinds, especially palms, encrusted with the saline matter of the lake. There are now no palm-trees in the neighbourhood, and in all probability those which are cast upon the shore at this day are the trees which flourished in the valley ages ago: having been carried down by the Jordan, they have been preserved till now by the qualities of the water. In some parts the cliffs project so far into the lake as to forbid all passage by the shore, and we are obliged to climb the precipitous face of the mountain, and pass along by the table-land above. On arriving within two hours of the extremity of the sea, we come to the north end of Usdum a low, long mountain running in a S. S. E. direction along the shore to the foot of the lake. To this mountain the great saltness of the waters of the Dead sea are mainly if not entirely owing: this ridge is nine miles in length, and a hundred and fifty feet in height; and is composed entirely of rock salt, covered with thin layers of limestone and marl. On the sides the covering often gives way, and the salt is seen in the form of precipices, forty to fifty feet high, and several hundred feet long; masses, becoming detached, roll down and are seen in the form of debris at its bottom. Professor Robinson, in passing along the base of this mountain, crossed several rills of transparent water,

flowing from it to the lake; "they were salt," says he, "as the saltest brine." The saltness of the lake is thus receiving daily accessions, and as very little of the saline matter can pass off by evaporation, it follows that the Dead sea is growing salter every year.

The southern shore, on which we have now arrived, is a low sandy beach, entirely unproductive. At the period when the Jordan overflows, it is natural to think that the waters of the Dead sea, being considerably enlarged, will pass beyond their usual limits, and, on this part of the shore the highest line to which they ever rise is distinctly marked by an extensive deposit of timber of all sizes; when the flood is over, pools are formed here and there on the beach which dry off into a salt as fine and as well bleached as that formed in regular salt-pans.[1] The land on the south-east of the lake is arable, abundantly irrigated, and covered with vegetation. Approaching it from the south, we pass through an open grove of acacia and doom tree, thinly sprinkled on the first part of the way; the form of fields and the mark of furrows render it evident that the ground has been recently cultivated. Here too we meet an extensive field of ruins,—large stones mixed with brick and pottery, supposed by Irby and Mangles to be the site of the ancient Zoar. Lower down, enclosed on all sides by thickets so as not to be visible till we have approached within a few yards of it, is the village of Zaffe—the modern Zoar. The inhabitants are no-

[1] The salt of this sea was used in the sacrifices, and its bitumen formed a component part of the incense employed in the Temple. The salt is still gathered by the natives and is carried to Jerusalem and Cairo. It is sometimes found covering the shore in a crust of some inches in thickness.

torious robbers, and their abode; say the travellers we have just referred to, has more the appearance of a village in India, or the South seas, than of any they saw in the east. Leaving the village, and descending towards the beach, the plain is covered with the ösher tree, (the apples of Sodom,) next comes a thick forest of tamarisks and canes, with a salt dew hanging on their foliage, the ground below is marshy and rotten; making our way with some difficulty through this jungle, we arrive on the beach, which is narrow and pebbly.[1]

One interesting fact connected with this lake we have not stated. It has no outlet, and many have been at a loss how to dispose of the water which the Jordan is hourly pouring into it: the apparent difficulty is further increased by the fact, that numerous streams descend to it from the mountains, both on the east and west. Under so hot a sun, the amount of evaporation must be very considerable; and this alone would enable us to account for the fact that the Dead sea never overflows, though it has no visible outlet: and if other causes were needed we could find them in the thirsty shores around the lake, which must drain off a considerable quantity of its contents, thus relieving us from the necessity of providing, as some have done, a subterranean channel for the conveyance

[1] This agrees with the rich character ascribed to the southern shores of this lake by ancient writers. Of the parts of Edom bordering on the Dead sea, Diodorus Siculus thus writes, lib. xi, cap. 48. We give Reland's translation. Palmetis ea regio felix est quantum ejus a benignis amnibus et fontibus irriguis intersulcatur. Ibi in convalle quadam balsamum gignitur, unde luculentum ipsis vectigal accedit, quia nusquam alibi in orbe terrarum hæc stirps invenitur.

of the superfluous waters from it to the Mediterranean.[1]

Although an object of interest in all ages, this mysterious body of water has not, even to this day, been properly explored. The first attempt of the kind made in modern times was by Mr. Costigan, an enterprising young Irishman. Attended by a Maltese sailor, Mr. Costigan sailed completely round it, taking the bearings of the coast, and crossed it repeatedly, sounding for its depth. This traveller died soon after of an illness induced by fatigue, and the deleterious air of the lake; but the results of the voyage were communicated by the surviving companion of his labours, whom Mr. Stephens sought out at Beyroot. The account given by Mr. Costigan's attendant has received a singular corroboration in one particular, and this induces us to place more reliance on the whole. It is to the following effect, "Every day they sounded, frequently with a line of one hundred and seventy-five brachia (about six feet each); that they found the bottom rocky and of very unequal depth, sometimes ranging thirty, forty, eighty, twenty brachia, all within a few boats' length; that sometimes the lead brought up sand, like that of the mountains on each side; that they failed in finding bottom but once, and in that place there were large bubbles all around for thirty paces, rising probably from a spring; that in one place they found on the bank a hot sulphur spring; that at the southern extremity Mr. Costigan looked for the River of

[1] When we see the same thing exhibited on a great scale it never strikes us as remarkable, or of difficult solution. What is the ocean but a great lake constantly replenished by the rivers, having no outlet, yet never overflowing its boundary?

Dogs, but did not find it; that in four different places they found ruins, and could clearly distinguish large hewn stones, which seemed to have been used for buildings; and in one place they saw ruins which Mr. Costigan said were the ruins of Gomorrah. But of the island, or what Paul and I had imagined to be such, he said that they too had noticed it particularly; and when they came towards the southern extremity of the lake, found that it was an optical deception, caused by a tongue of high land, that put out for a long distance from the middle of the southern extremity." Irby and Mangles had, twenty years before, ascertained this supposed island to be a high ridge of land running into the lake from the southern shore, exactly as Stephens' informant described it; but of this, neither Mr. Stephens nor the Maltese sailor knew anything; and this singular corroboration of this part of the story leads us to give greater credence to the whole; in which indeed there is nothing of the marvellous, unless in what relates to the four different places in which they found ruins.

The predatory habits of the Arabs on the eastern shore throw great obstacles in the way of fully exploring this sea, and even the authorities have sometimes discouraged the attempt; but of late a scientific gentleman, Mr. Moore, has been more fortunate: having obtained a firman from the pasha of Egypt, he has fully examined this lake, though the result of his survey has not yet been given to the public.[1]

[1] The modern authorities consulted for this account of the Dead sea, which embraces every thing of importance known regarding that singular body of water, are Maundrell, pp. 136—140; Mariti, vol. ii, pp. 370—379; Shaw, pp. 346, 347; Burckhardt, pp. 392—394; Irby and Mangles, pp. 446—456; Stephens, vol.

There is a question of great interest connected with this celebrated body of water, to which we shall advert before leaving the subject. To what period are we to refer the formation of the Dead sea? Has it existed here from the beginning of time? or does it owe its origin to the destruction of the Cities of the Plain?

When Burckhardt explored Edom, he discovered a broad valley,—El Araba, extending from the extremity of the Dead sea south to the eastern arm of the Red sea. This intelligent traveller concluded, and, as has since been discovered, concluded justly, that this great valley was a prolongation of the plain of the Jordan; and he thought he had good reasons for believing, that no lake existed in the plain previous to the destruction of Sodom, and that the Jordan held on its course through the great valley on the south, and discharged its waters into the Red sea. This was a beautiful theory, and every traveller who succeeded Burckhardt adopted it. It was thought to free us from all the difficulties attending the supposition that a lake existed in the plain of Siddim previous to the overthrow of Sodom; and to form a striking proof, although certainly such a proof was unnecessary, of the destruction of the plain by some terrible catastrophe in some former age. But recent discoveries have shown that this theory is founded on an imperfect induction of facts, and we are now obliged to say, that it is no longer tenable.

Two travellers have lately explored the valley of

ii, pp. 262—275; Elliot, vol. ii, pp. 479—487; Robinson, vol. i, pp. 63—69; Professor Robinson, Am. Bib. Rep. Series ii, vol. i, pp. 419, 422, 423; Paxton's Letters, pp. 159—164.

Araba, professor Robinson and count de Bertou. The former did not advance far into the valley, it is true; but he went far enough to furnish evidence that the Jordan could never have flowed through it; the latter traversed its whole extent from the Dead sea to the gulph of Akaba. The count is the only European who ever performed this journey—and however dreary the descent through this valley, it derives some interest from the fact that it is the same valley through which the Israelites passed when they journeyed to compass the land of Edom. Burchhardt merely crossed this valley on his way to Egypt. Laborde ascended it to the pass leading to Petra. Lindsay and Stephens ascended it only to the same point, and then crossed it in a N.W. direction on their way to Hebron: to count Bertou alone belongs the honour of having traversed the whole extent of El Araba. The facts which Robinson and the count have established regarding the question we are now considering are these: First, that the level of the Dead sea, and of the plain of the Jordan generally, is very much below that of the Red sea: and Second, that the valley El Araba rises gradually as we go southward till we come to Wady Talh (Accacia Vale) and all the springs in this portion of the valley take a northerly direction and flow into the Dead sea.

These facts, which are well ascertained, settle the question, we conceive, that the Jordan could never have flowed through the valley of Araba, and consequently that a lake must have existed in the vale of Siddim ever since the Jordan began to flow, and that the Dead sea does not owe its existence to the destruction of the cities of the plain.

The question which arises next is this; Where did the cities stand, and what has become of that part of the plain on which the destruction fell? Several have been of opinion that the cities stood upon the shore, and that the ground they occupied is that adjoining the lake which remains to this day. Reland has supported this opinion at considerable length, citing the authority of Galen and Josephus, both of whom speak of the country of Sodom as existing in their day: He has endeavoured to strengthen his position by appealing also to several incidental allusions in Scripture to the destruction of the cities of the plain which, in his view, imply that the ground on which these cities stood was not submerged, but given over to perpetual barrenness.

Our opinion differs somewhat from that of Reland, and very considerably from that of those who believe that the destruction of Sodom was the first formation of this lake. It is as follows:—That a lake previously existed, though of smaller dimensions, that between its southern extremity and the head of the valley of Araba was a fertile plain of seventeen miles in extent, and that this is the scriptural valley of Siddim and the site of the guilty cities.

Our reasons for believing this hypothesis to be the true one are these:—The supposition of a lake previously existing is unavoidable. The bed of the Jordan is so far below the level of El Araba and the Red sea that it is impossible, in the nature of things, it ever could have flowed through that valley. And this we conceive implies the existence of a lake. But though we are obliged to suppose that a lake existed, we are not obliged to suppose that it was as

large as it is at present. It is natural to think that so terrible a catastrophe happening on its shores would make some alteration in its dimensions, and most probably enlarge them. And if we examine the lake, we find that it is in fact composed of two lakes, an upper and a lower—the former being forty miles long, and the latter ten, assuming the whole at fifty. The division between the two lakes is strongly marked. On the shores the mountains approach, so as almost to separate them above; and in the bottom a high ridge of ground runs across from shore to shore, so as almost to divide them below the surface. The water which covers this ridge is seldom more than two feet in depth, and the ford which the bottom offers may be crossed by the Arabs at all seasons. This ford is about three hours (nine miles) from the extremity of the lake, on the authority of Burckhardt. Now, if we suppose that the lake in former times terminated at this point, as the form of the mountains and the nature of the bottom seem to indicate, then between the extremity of the lake and the low range of hills which bound the valley of the Jordan towards the south, and form the head of El Araba, we have a level and fertile plain of seventeen miles in length, on which we suppose the cities stood. The south-eastern portion of this plain is still very fertile, the whole is abundantly irrigated. Its great depth draws all the springs of the Araba into it. Numerous rivulets descend on both sides from the hills; and to these causes, no doubt, it owed the fertile aspect in which it appeared to Lot, when he chose it for the range of his flocks. "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of

the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord."

Moreover, it is more reasonable to suppose that the five cities stood on this plain, than that they were scattered over so large a space as that which is now occupied by the lake. Each of the cities, we are told, had a king; but the kings of those days resembled the village shiekhs of modern times; and even granting that the cities were opulent, and had dependent villages around them, still the plain was amply sufficient to maintain them. In the east the towns were thickly planted, seldom at greater distances, as we learn from their ruins, than three or four miles—a space so large as that which the waters of the lake now cover, considering its great fertility, instead of containing five, would have contained fifty cities.

From the expression frequently used in Scripture —"Sodom and her daughters," and from the circumstance of the destruction of the cities being often mentioned simply as the "overthrow of Sodom," we infer that Sodom was the capital, or at least the principal city of the pentapolis; and it is probable that the other towns which perished with her were ranged around her at no great distances. The exact part of the plain in which Sodom was situated we do not know; but the following consideration will satisfy us, that its site could not have been far from what are now the southern limits of the lake.

When Sodom fell, the little town of Zoar afforded refuge to Lot. The time which Lot occupied in going thither will give us the distance of Sodom, the pro-

bable capital, from Zoar. We read that "there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom. And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night." During night, the angels disclosed the approaching destruction of the city, and enjoined Lot to leave it, which he did at day-break, but not earlier. "When the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife and thy two daughters which are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the place. And while he lingered, the men took hold upon his hand." Having set out, he reached the gates of Zoar at sunrise. "The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." It thus appears that Lot occupied only two hours in travelling between the two cities —the time from daybreak till sunrise. Sodom consequently could not have been more than six miles distant from Zoar; and thus its site would fall within the limits of the lower lake; for the head of that lake is three hours from Zoar—the site of Zoar, which is known at this day, adjoining the southern extremity of the lake. Now, if we suppose that Sodom was the capital of the cities, and had her tributary towns ranged round her, it will appear probable that the site of all these cities was comprised in what is now the basin of the lower lake. The ground on which they stood being depressed by their

overthrow, the lake adjoining them on the north poured its waters over the low barrier, and covered for ever from the eyes of man this scene of enormous wickedness. Every consideration tends to this conclusion. The geographical arrangement of the region, and the construction of the lake, indicate that at some former period it has been enlarged, and the traces of the pristine beauty of the plain, which are still to be seen in some places on its remaining portion, tell us that once it "was well watered everywhere," "even as the garden of the Lord." Among the many judgments which Heaven has inflicted on our earth, the destruction of these cities with the plain on which they stood, is perhaps second in terror only to the deluge.

Travellers have frequently been assured that the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah are still to be seen in certain states of the lake; but we know of no intelligent person who has seen them with his own eyes. Stephens and Elliot have strongly maintained the possibility of these ruins still existing at the bottom of the lake; but they have forgotten, that in these early days houses were built of mud, and of other materials equally frail; and it cannot be reasonably supposed, that after the lapse of nearly four thousand years, and especially after their destruction by fire, the remains of these cities are still visible.

We must now leave this smitten and desolate region, which looks as if it were yet mute with terror. It is called the Dead sea; and how apt an emblem is it of Death itself, which retains all it receives within its dark confine. Unlike other waters, it sends no tribute to the ocean. No flower springs to

beautify its shores; there is scarce a tree to invite the tenant of the air; the breeze seldom ruffles its surface; and no proof has ever yet been obtained that any living thing exists in it. On its shores we feel as if we had left the world of the living, and entered some vast sepulchre whose floor are the still waters, and its walls the dark mountains around. We cast our eyes along the Judean shore, across the expanse of the lake, up the dark mountains of Moab beyond, and think instinctively of that night of guilty riot, to which this eternal silence has succeeded. On the dark expanse before us, then a smiling plain, stood Sodom with her sister cities. Adown the mountains on which we stand rolled the streams by which the vale was well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the Lord. Over these hills in front came the sunrise which lighted Lot to the gates of Zoar. But alas! the sun which rose on him set for ever on those whom he left behind. A sulphurous lake now rolls above Sodom, and like a dark veil hides her guilty remains from every eye: nor shall that veil ever be lifted, nor the awful mysteries it conceals disclosed, till that more terrible morning, when the last trumpet shall sound, and Sodom shall rise again to condemn cities whose sin has been greater than hers, though the Supreme Ruler has not seen it meet to overthrow them in the same fearful manner.

CHAPTER IX.

FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY IN THE PRESENT STATE OF JUDEA.

Advantageous position for beginning the inquiry—Prophecy quoted—Proof that these predictions refer to more lengthened calamities than any inflicted at the period of the Babylonish captivity—Medal of Vespasian—The whole land desolate—Seed-time and harvest comparatively at an end—The earth iron The rain powder and dust—The land brimstone and salt—Peculiar desolation of the portion of Judah—The land more desolate than the ancient wildernesses—Destruction of trees—Fall of the cedars of Lebanon—Decay of the olive—Desolation of the vine—Soil covered with briers and thorns—Ruin of maritime cities and decay of commerce—Deplorable state of the highways—Cessation of internal intercourse—Judea subjected to frequent change of masters—Oppressed by the Turks—Djezzar Pacha—Tyranny of Mehemet Ali—Robberies of the Arabs—The land polluted by its inhabitants—Decay of music Melancholy of the people—Oriental entertainments—Exhaustion of the revenue of Palestine—The land empty of men—Ratio of the depopulation—Deplorable condition of its few inhabitants—Insalubrity of certain tracts of Palestine—Incursions of locusts—The land enjoying her sabbaths—Astonishment with which all travellers have visited Judea—Conclusion.

We are now in the most favourable circumstances for judging whether the predictions of the prophets have been fulfilled on the land of Israel. We have carefully examined its mountains, plains, and valleys; we have traversed the whole country, from its ex-

treme boundary on the south to the foot of Lebanon, and we have studied to present a faithful picture of that land as it exists at this moment. We have not sought to deepen its desolation from the wish that our page might reflect the same images of ruin with that of the prophets; nor, influenced by the associations with which this land will always be connected, have we endeavoured to paint it as more beautiful than it really is; our task has simply been to arrange and mould into one representation the vast mass of materials which an hundred travellers have accumulated. And, before turning to the prophets, we venture to affirm, that the picture we have exhibited will be found to agree, even to its more minute features, with that given in prophecy before the curse was inflicted on Palestine, and in an age when the splendour of its cities and the beauty and fertility of its plains rivalled those of the fairest and happiest portions of the earth. We might safely leave the case in the hands of every intelligent and impartial person, entreating him only to compare the statement we have given with what the prophets foretold; but all may not have leisure to make this comparison; and few we believe will be averse to hear the travellers at greater length, and to have the actual condition of this country brought still more fully out. We therefore proceed to notice the more important of the prophecies relating to Palestine, and shall compare them individually with the facts which recent travellers have communicated.

It was foretold regarding this land generally that its cities should be swept away; that the whole country should be reduced to a wilderness; that its soil

should be iron, and its rain powder and dust; and that the curse of barrenness should be inflicted with peculiar severity on that portion of the land which was occupied by the nation of Judah. It was foretold regarding it, that its vines and olives should perish, and that those of its trees which remained should cease to yield their fruit. That its soil should be covered with briers; its opulent maritime cities destroyed, and its commerce brought to an end; that its highways should be desolate, and its internal intercourse arrested. That it should be oppressed by tyrants, spoiled by robbers, defiled by the wicked, scourged by plague, fevers, and agues, infested by locusts; that it should become empty of men, and so impoverished that it should cease to enrich its oppressors. That, under these accumulated calamities, the "joy" of the land should depart, and a continual melancholy darken the countenance and oppress the hearts of its inhabitants. That it should become a fearful monument of the Divine wrath, and be as distinguished for its desolation as it had formerly been for its fertility and beauty; and that no one should tread its desolate soil without awe and astonishment at its numerous and terrible plagues. All these curses were denounced against this land, and we now proceed to show that *all* have been inflicted upon it.

The prophecies which relate to the ruin of the cities we shall illustrate in the following chapter; we proceed at present to speak of those which foretold the desolation of the land. Before the tribes entered Canaan we find Moses denouncing against them the following calamities, provided they should refuse, in

after ages, to obey the voice of the Lord. "I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass. And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. And I will bring the land into desolation, and your enemies who dwell therein shall be astonished at it.[1] Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in. So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it; and that the whole land thereof is brimstone and salt and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein. Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger?"[2] It is impossible for any predictions to be clearer than those of Moses; but the prophecies of Isaiah relating to this subject are distinguished by a strain of fervid eloquence and lofty imagery peculiar to this prophet: "The land shall be utterly emptied and utterly spoiled; for the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merry-hearted do sigh."[3] "The earth mourneth

[1] Lev., xxvi, 19, 20, 32. [2] Deut., xxviii, 38; xxix, 22—24.
[3] Isaiah, xxiv, 3—7.

and languisheth ; Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down; Sharon is like a wilderness, and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits." [1] "The land perisheth, and is burnt up like a wilderness, that none passeth through." [2] "How long shall the land mourn and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds, because they said he shall not see our last end." [3] "This whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment." [4] "Son of man, set thy face towards the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God; Thus saith the Lord God to the mountains and to the hills, to the rivers and to the valleys, Behold I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places. So will I stretch out my hand upon them, and make the land desolate; yea, more desolate than the wilderness toward Diblath." [5]

It were needless to multiply quotations. Predictions equally plain regarding the desolation of the land of Israel may be found in all the Prophets. Most of the prophecies we have now cited were given before the invasion of the Chaldeans, and some may imagine that they were fulfilled in the devastation of the country by the arms of Nebuchadnezzar; but there are many circumstances which show that the main and ultimate reference of the Spirit of God was to calamities to be inflicted in a more distant age, of far greater severity, and of much longer continuance than any which befell the nation and land of

[1] Isaiah, xxxiii, 9. [2] Jeremiah, ix, 12. [3] Jeremiah, xii, 4. [4] Jeremiah, xxv, 11. [5] Ezekiel, vi, 2, 3, 14.

Israel at the period of the Babylonish captivity. It is the manner of divine Providence to send a partial fulfilment of such predictions as the precursor of their full accomplishment. It is not probable that so large a portion of the inspired volume would have been occupied with these predictions provided they referred exclusively to calamities which were not to continue longer than seventy years. Ezekiel alludes to judgments yet to fall on the land, although he lived during the Babylonish captivity, when its first calamities had actually been inflicted. The prophets who lived before the captivity foretold the universal restoration of the Jews as the consequence of the effusion of the Spirit from on high *in the latter days*—a phrase which they always employed to designate the gospel dispensation; the Holy Spirit thus intimating that the calamities of the land should continue during part of that dispensation, and terminate only when the Jews returned; for the restoration of the land and people are always spoken of as events to happen at the same time. Those who prophesied after the captivity in Babylon speak less frequently of the future desolation of the land, because it was not their wish to discourage the captives who had recently returned, nor was there any thing in the conduct of the people which particularly required that warnings and denunciations should be employed as a corrective; but they speak of a second and universal return of the Jews from all countries, which clearly implied a second and more extensive captivity of the people, and another and more lengthened period of judgment on the land. In fine, Moses, the first of the prophets, in the terrible judgments which he denounces against the nation

and country of the Jews, unquestionably refers to a period subsequent to the invasion and overthrow of Judea by the Romans; and Malachi, the last of the prophets, closes his ministry by assuring the Jews, that provided the tide of national degeneracy, which had then begun to flow, and was in fact running high, was not arrested by the appearance and preaching of the great Prophet, whose coming was near, that Jehovah would come and smite their land with a "curse," namely, the curse denounced by the prophets in former ages, and which still stood unrepealed against them.

No reasonable doubt, then, can be entertained that these predictions contemplated severer and more lengthened calamities than any which were inflicted on Judea at the period of the Babylonish captivity. Indeed it was not till Jerusalem was a second time overthrown, and the country a second time time laid waste, that the gloomy picture of the prophets began to be fully realized. The Messiah being cut off, those desolations began which, as Daniel foretold, were not to cease till they had reached their consummation. For eighteen hundred years they have continued to be "poured upon the desolate." They have not yet come to an end; but as no new feature of the predicted desolation remains to be evolved, we may conclude that that end is not now distant. We now proceed to compare the prophecy with the fact.

She, being desolate, shall sit upon the ground.[1] By this striking and beautiful image does Isaiah depict the forlorn condition of Judea. That she has been reduced to the condition the prophet contemplated is

[1] Isaiah, iii, 26.

clear from the fact that we find her conqueror employing the *same* figure to represent her desolation—a woman sitting sorrowfully on the ground. About eight hundred years after the giving of the prophecy, Judea being overrun and all her towns taken and destroyed by the legions under the command of Titus, Vespasian ordered a medal to be struck to commemorate the subjugation of the province. That medal bore the representation of a woman sitting in a mournful posture beneath one of her own palm-trees. We cannot suppose that the emperor consulted the pages of Isaiah before stamping the impression upon his medal, yet we find the prophet in foretelling and the conqueror in commemorating the desolation of the land using the very same symbol. This is a coincidence between prophecy and history minute indeed, but striking and satisfactory in proportion to its minuteness. It is what an impostor would never have thought of.

Thus hath the LORD *said, the whole land shall be desolate.*[1] There is not, in all Palestine, a single district under regular cultivation. Here and there we meet fields covered with wheat, or vales mantled with vineyards; but these are solitary instances, scarcely enlivening the surrounding sterility more than the beauty of a single flower the terrors of the wilderness. Even in districts which enjoy some sort of cultivation, the produce is far below what the excellence of the soil and climate might lead us to expect. The *whole* country is subject to the oppressions of the Turks and the robberies of the Arabs, and these have fulfilled the prophecy,

[1] Jeremiah, iv, 27.

"The whole land is spoiled."[1] The central portion of Palestine is a chain of naked hills. It is long since their terraces were destroyed, and the soil which covered them washed away; and, though the olive-woods of Samaria beautify somewhat the middle portion of the line, they are scarcely able to relieve the barrenness of the long and dreary range which extends from Lebanon south to Edom. The lateral plains are covered in winter and the early part of summer with a rich spontaneous herbage, which is burnt up as the season advances, and then the plain presents to the eye a more desolate picture than the mountain. Among the hills the springs which reach the valleys nourish only thistles, reeds, oleanders, and other plants unserviceable to man. In fact, the most beautiful vales are overgrown with noxious weeds. Travelling amongst the hills south of Nazareth, Richardson says, "We passed a long and tedious hill, at the bottom of which we entered a beautiful valley, which, from appearances, we expected to have found in a cultivated state; but it was without a house, and overgrown with weeds and brambles. Part of it had been ploughed the year before, but suffered to remain uncropt. Despotism and death alike intercept the labours of the husbandman."[2] The present condition of the fertile plains on the coast, including the valley of Sharon, was brought fully under our notice in our journey from Carmel to the southern desert. Few spots on that plain are sown; still fewer are reaped by the proper husbandman. Sand, crops of thistles, and withered grass cover the soil, where, in other days, corn waved

[1] Jeremiah, iv, 20. [2] Richardson, vol. ii, p. 412.

and the vine flourished. "In short," says Paxton, "the plain—the noble and celebrated plain of Sharon, appears to be almost deserted; and while it has a fertility and extent, were it occupied and properly cultivated, sufficient to sustain a nation, it is now roamed over by a few flocks—has small patches of it cultivated, and here and there a small poor village to sustain." [1] *The earth mourneth and languisheth.*[2] *Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate.*[3] North of Carmel, the same scene of neglect and desolation is exhibited on the great plain of Acre as on that of Sharon. Thousands, shut up in the town of Acre, are enduring the extreme of poverty, while the plain around—"a magnificent expanse of the richest land" [4]—is quite neglected, and covered with a wild vegetation intolerably rank. "The plain," says Stephens, "was very extensive, naturally rich, but almost entirely uncultivated." [5] "The soil," says Buckingham, "which resembled the dark loam of Egypt, was now chiefly covered with thistles of a larger kind, and in greater abundance than I had ever seen before." [6]

Beyond the hills which form the eastern boundary of this plain are the rich vales of Zebulun, Abilene, and Zephoury. They all agree in the fertility of their soil, the richness of their herbage, and the state of utter neglect in which they are allowed to remain. These are the valleys to which the blessing of Jacob *once* applied. "Out of Asher his bread shall be fat." Beyond them on the east is

[1] Paxton's Letters, p. 108.
[2] Isaiah, xxxiii, 9.
[3] Isaiah, xxiv, 6.
[4] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 78.
[5] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 353.
[6] Buckingham, vol. i, p. 99.

the VALE OF NAZARETH, which "has no pretensions to beauty..... Its hills are barren and uncultivated."[1] The most magnificent valley in this quarter, and indeed in all Palestine, is the plain of ESDRAELON, which runs eastward from the boundary of Zebulon to the Jordan. Here, if any where, we might expect to find the ancient fertility of the Land of Promise; but perhaps there is no part of the land where the desolation which the curse has produced is so visible, from the great extent of territory which is here under the eye. In the times of Israel every foot-breadth of this great plain was either planted with vines and fig-trees, or tilled and sowed with grain; for the Hebrews devoted only the less fertile parts of the country to grazing. At that period its entire surface was covered with towns, vineyards, royal gardens, and luxuriant crops; but now almost every trace of cultivation, and every vestige of a human dwelling have been swept from its bosom. It is the place where the Arabs pasture their flocks, and sometimes fight their battles. Through want of culture, forests of thistles flourish on many parts of it, so luxuriant, that the traveller is scarce able to force his way through them, even on horseback.[2] All the interest which now belongs to this great plain is entirely that which arises from ancient associations. *Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.*[3] The vales situated farther north in Galilee are equally neglected. They have

[1] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 82. [2] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 85.
[3] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 348.

generally a dusty appearance; though in winter and after rains their aspect is beautiful, from the fresh and rich verdure with which they are clothed. In his whole ride from Cana south to Tabor, Lindsay saw only one cultivated spot—a small plain covered with corn.[1] The once rich valley through which the Jordan flows, from its source at Banias to the lake of Gennesareth, abounds in swamps and jungles, which are haunted by beasts of prey. The rich plains around the lake of Tiberias are now covered with long grass and thistles; and the numerous streams by which they are crossed from the mountains, and which in former ages were shaded by the palm, are now covered with thickets of oleander. The scream of the vulture is the only sound on that shore, which was once the seat of numerous towns.[2] If we descend the valley in search of that beauty and fertility which Josephus and other writers have laboured to describe, we find that the curse has entered into this "garden of God," and laid it waste. We journey along a vale, where the soil is barren, the waters impure, and the air infectious. On either hand is a dark chain of hills; and though the heat is great, we seek in vain for the palm or balsam to shade us from the scorching ray. These have long since disappeared from the "valley of palm-trees." We pass the fountain of Elisha,—whose waters still flow, though not to diffuse plenty as of old; and the dark mounds of the fallen Jericho; but the farther we advance, the ground becomes more barren and the scenery more desolate. "The

[1] For the concurrent testimony of travellers regarding the present desolate state of this plain, see p. 187.

[2] Isaiah, xxiv, 1.

day was dark and gloomy," says Wilson, "as if Heaven in its righteous judgment had frowned on this land, and marked it out as one which should be excluded from the regard or superintendance of Providence; and it exhibited a woful picture of desolation. The track was so deep as to render it difficult to get forward the mules and horses. Not an animal besides these was to be found, for whom, indeed, the ground could afford no kind of sustenance, on account of its nakedness: nor was the note of a bird to be heard, or even the smallest insect to be discovered." [1] Thus wherever we journey in this once beautiful land, the same picture meets the eye—desolation is on all sides. On the hills the bramble has supplanted the vine and the fig-tree; and on the plains thistles and long grass, which the sun scorches or the Arab tramples down, cover soils whose produce in former ages sustained the many thousands of Israel. *The whole land is desolate. The LORD of Hosts saith thus, Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted, I will pluck up, even this whole land.* [2] *And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.* [3] *Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the land be utterly desolate.* [4]

It is not sown, nor beareth. [5] This is another feature of the predicted desolation of Judea. Speaking generally, seed-time and harvest are at an end in Palestine. The former and the latter rains descend,

[1] Wilson, pp. 164, 165. [2] Jer. xlv, 4. [3] Isa. xvii, 4.
[4] Isaiah, vi, 10, 11. [5] Deuteronomy, xxix, 23.

not to *mollify the earth and bless its springing*, but to revive the wild herbage of the valleys after the heats of summer, or to convert the rich soil of the plains into quagmires. The sun shines, not to ripen the *new wine in the cluster*, but to scorch the naked face of the mountain. "Regions of the highest fertility," says Dr. Bowring, "remain fallow, and the traveller passes over continuous leagues of the richest soil, which is wholly unproductive to man. Nay, towns surrounded by lands capable of the most successful cultivation, are often compelled to import corn for the daily consumption." [1] Few will sow in a land where property enjoys no protection, and where any one who comes first may reap the fruits. And even on fields which are cultivated, so inefficient is the mode of agriculture, and so slothful is the husbandman, that the weeds are sometimes as plentiful as the grain, and a scanty crop is gathered in from soils which of old yielded an hundredfold. *The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted. Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen. Howl, O ye vine-dressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished.* [2] And when we think of the insecurity with which their scanty harvest is gathered in; how often it happens that the peasant sows and the Bedouin reaps, or the officer of the pacha comes and seizes all, leaving only a miserable tithe to the cultivator, we are reminded of another prophecy. *They shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat.* [3]

[1] Report of the Commercial Statistics of Syria, by John Bowring, LL.D. [*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of her Majesty.*] Lond. 1840.

[2] Joel, i, 10, 11.

[3] Jeremiah, v, 17.

Thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.[1] In an uncultivated country the sky becomes peculiarly arid and scorching, from the almost entire want of evaporation. This, acting on a soil which is destitute of any covering, may be said to convert it into iron. That the prophecy has been fulfilled, is evident from the fact, that we find the aspect of the country suggesting the same figure to the traveller which Moses has employed—only the traveller applies to the earth the term Moses has applied to the firmament. "The eye," says Carne, who was gazing from the top of Lebanon eastward to Hermon and the adjoining parts of the Holy Land,—"The eye looks wistfully into the plains of Asia, and asks for its towns and hamlets and populous places, and sees only mountains like brass, bare and terrible."

The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust. When the country was inhabited and cultivated, the breeze as it passed along put in motion the golden fields of grain, or the lively green of its olive-covered hills; but in the absence of irrigation, the great heat converts the soil into a dry powder, which the wind easily catches up, and scatters over the face of the country. Great part of the plain of Sharon adjoining the coast is covered with sand, which the winds have brought up upon it from the shore of the Mediterranean. "The mountains," says Lamartine, "are completely destitute of vegetation. They are barren rocks, covered with a blackish rocky cinder, which the wind ploughs up and scatters like a funeral shroud over the surface of the

[1] Deuteronomy, xxviii, 23.

earth," *The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust; from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.*[1]

The whole land thereof is brimstone and salt.[2] The presence of salt in the soil is altogether incompatible with its fertility; and on that account the term is frequently used as the emblem of barrenness. To say regarding a land, that it shall be sown with salt, is just to predict, in strong figurative language, that it shall be brought to the last stage of sterility. In this sense, the threatening has been fulfilled on almost the whole land of Judea; and in some portions this terrible malediction has been inflicted in its most literal meaning. In his journey down the plain of Jericho to the Dead sea, a part of Palestine which was very fruitful in ancient times, Maundrell found the whole country covered with salt.[3] Others have recorded the same fact. "The plain," says Robinson, "was whitened all around with a saline crust, brought out by the action of the sun after rain, from a soil evidently impregnated with this mineral."[4] It is not in the neighbourhood of the Dead sea only that this appearance is seen. The same is found to be the condition of the plain at a considerable distance above Jericho. Buckingham crossed it opposite the point where the city of Phasaelus is supposed to have stood; and though Josephus informs us that the adjoining region was greatly improved by the cultivation which the inhabitants of this town introduced,[5] yet the following is the ac-

[1] Deuteronomy, xxviii, 24. [2] Deuteronomy, xxix, 23.
[3] Maundrell. [4] Robinson, vol. i, p. 64.
[5] Antiq. of Jews, book 16, c. 5.

count which Buckingham gives of its present appearance: "We found the plain here generally unfertile, the soil being in many places encrusted with salt, and having small heaps of a white powder like sulphur scattered at short intervals over its surface."[1] Thus the stranger from a far land, as Moses foretold, now sees "the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it, and that the whole land thereof is brimstone and salt and burning."

Although it was foretold that the *whole land* should be desolate, the threatening was denounced especially against that part of the land which formed the ancient kingdom of Judah. *I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah. I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord.*[2] It was against the land of Judah that Jeremiah denounced this curse: "And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment."[3] Indeed, we are obliged to view the whole prophecy of Jeremiah as having a peculiar reference to this part of Canaan, seeing the ten tribes had been carried away captive when he prophesied. Now, of the three districts into which Palestine was divided in the time of the Saviour—Judea, Samaria, and Galilee—Judea is at this day, beyond question, the most desolate. In Samaria and Galilee, but especially in Samaria, there are many lovely views; but if we except the fields around Hebron, and a few vales to the south-west of Jerusalem, where the vine is cultivated, Judea is entirely made up of plains which are never

[1] Buckingham, vol. ii, p. 89. [2] Zephaniah, i, 2, 4.
[3] Jeremiah, xxv, 11.

tilled, and of mountains from whose sides the earth has long since been stript. Jerusalem was the guiltiest of the cities, and Judah the guiltiest of the tribes; and on this portion of the chosen land and the chosen people has the curse fallen with the greatest severity. Every traveller has been struck with the marked difference between this and other parts of the Holy Land. "All Judea," says Lindsay, "except the hills of Hebron and the vales immediately about Jerusalem, is desolate and barren; but the prospect brightens as soon as you quit it."[1] "Until I came to this place," says Stephens, who had now traversed the whole of Judea, and entered the valley of Shechem in Samaria, "I had frequently said to myself, that I would not give the estate of a wealthy gentleman in Geneseo for the whole kingdom of David."[2] Equally emphatic is the testimony of Elliot. "From Attel, the mountains of the tribe of Benjamin assume a more sterile appearance. In fact, they are wholly uncultivated, the terraces being out of repair. Mould is no sooner formed than it is washed down the slopes; and perhaps in no other country is such a mass of rock exhibited without an atom of soil. It is only here and there that a field is seen, even in the valleys, in a state of tillage."[3] Of the aspect of Jerusalem and the country around, Richardson says,—"At present it is perfectly naked, and stands in the midst of the most barren ground I ever saw."[4] Nor is the prospect enlivened by being made more extensive. "The general view of Judea," says Wilson, "from the

[1] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 70.
[2] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 310.
[3] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 410.
[4] Richardson, vol. ii, p. 404.

summit of the mount of Olives, reminded me of many parts of the Highlands of Scotland, from the number of hills, like an ocean fixed into solidity, when heaving in its wildest fury, presenting themselves on all sides."[1] Thus has Jehovah fulfilled his threatening, in *utterly consuming all things from off the land*, and making her *a desolation and an astonishment. Then shall they know that I am the Lord, when I have laid the land most desolate, because of all their abominations which they have committed.*[2] "In the whole distance from Jerusalem to Jericho," says Robinson, "we did not meet with a living creature, nor did we see anything that indicated the habitation of man, or the mark of his hand on the soil."[3] *I will cut off man from off the land, saith the Lord.*[4]

So will I stretch out my hand upon them, and make the land desolate; yea, more desolate than the wilderness towards Diblath.[5] By a wilderness the ancient Hebrew did not understand a sandy desert, but a tract fit only for grazing. Every part of the arable land was under cultivation, being either planted or sown. Soils which were less fertile, or which could not be easily irrigated, were allowed to lie fallow. Such places were termed wildernesses, though they often produced a rich grass, on which the flocks were sent to feed. Thus we read of the "pastures of the wilderness." It was foretold that the country generally should revert into this state; and at this day Judea is occupied as pasture-ground; and

[1] Wilson, p. 117.
[2] Ezekiel, xxxiii, 29.
[3] Robinson, vol. i, p. 56.
[4] Zephaniah, i, 3.
[5] Ezekiel, vi, 14.

the only difference between it and the wildernesses in which the Hebrews in ancient times pastured their flocks is that for the most part, we suspect, it is not equal to them in point of fertility. The land has become more desolate than the wilderness. There can be no doubt, that anciently every part of the plain of Sharon was cultivated. Almost the only use to which it is now turned is that of grazing. "We then travelled for some time," says Wilson, "across the plain of Sharon, where flocks were grazing."[1] *Sharon shall be a fold of flocks.*[2]

Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon the trees of the field. Anciently Judea could boast of a great number of trees of all kinds. Not to speak of her vines and olives, so valuable both as an article of home consumption and of foreign traffic, the country nourished the fig, the palm, the balsam, the citron, the apple, the myrtle, the sycamore, the fir, and others. But now few trees of any kind are to be seen in Judea, if we except the straggling vines and olives which remain in several places, the low oaks which are sometimes seen on the sides of the hills, and the oleanders which are so abundant on the margin of all the streams. The ravages of war and the indolence of the inhabitants have led to their almost total disappearance. The country in consequence has a bare aspect; and the same cause has contributed materially to deteriorate the soil—seeing it has been left without shelter, to be acted on for ages by a powerful sun. The desolation of the palm is peculiarly striking. This beautiful and ge-

[1] Wilson, p. 101. [2] Isaiah, lxv, 10.

nerous tree adorned the country, and supplied the ancient Hebrew with an important article of food; but now two or three of these trees are rarely seen together; and as their fruit seldom ripens, they are of little use, unless to shade the dwelling of the native. "In the plain of Jericho," says Lindsay, "I saw one palm-tree at Riha—one only. "The balsam-trees have been extinct for ages."[1] *The vine is dried up, and the fig-tree languisheth, the pomegranate-tree, the palm-tree also, and the apple-tree, even all the trees of the field are withered.*[2]

And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them.[3] This we apprehend applies to Lebanon, and is certainly fulfilled in the present condition of its cedars. Those of the most limited powers of calculation may easily count all that now remain of the older cedars. Of the trees which may be presumed to have stood on the mountain ages ago, travellers generally reckon only seven.[4] On some parts of Lebanon there are plan-

[1] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 63. [2] Joel, i, 12. [3] Isaiah, x, 19.

[4] It is worthy of remark, that these seven surviving trees are found on the same part of the mountain which appears to have been famed in the times of the prophets for producing the largest cedars. We may adduce the following passage in Ezekiel, xxxi, 16, 18, as authority. The prophet is speaking of the fall of the kings of Assyria and of Egypt. "I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit, and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon. To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? Yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth." The Eden mentioned here is obviously not the primeval garden, but the village of Eden which is beautifully situated on the western side of Lebanon. Here in the time of the prophet, "the choice and best of Lebanon" flourished; and a little above the village, at this day, are found the remains of the ancient forests.

tations of young cedars; but these are not taken into account. The only traveller who finds fault with the general method of speaking of the cedars of Lebanon is Mr. Fisk,[1] who at the same time substantiates the statement commonly given regarding the paucity of the trees of older and larger growth.

The labour of the olive shall fail.[2] The decay of the olive forms an important feature in the desolation of Judea. This was the most abundant, as it was the most valuable of all the trees of the ancient Palestine. Canaan was described by Moses as "a land of oil-olive."[3] The culture of this tree was an object of first importance to the Hebrews, who planted olive-yards as we do orch-yards. The abundant and excellent oil which it yielded formed one of the chief sources of the national wealth. It was equally useful at the table and in the toilette, in the service of the temple and in their trade with other nations. The olive is now greatly decayed; nevertheless it is still the most abundant of the woods of Palestine. Its productive power, however, is greatly diminished. The skilful and careful culture necessary to preserve its fruitfulness is no longer bestowed upon it. In addition to this, it often suffers severely from the rage of contending factions. Speaking of two villages on the plain of Sharon, Mariti says,—"The road between them is remarkably pleasant, as you are sheltered by the shade of a plantation of old olive-trees, each of which is so large that two men could not encircle them with their arms. They, however, produce only once in two years. They are pruned

[1] Memoirs, p. 302. [2] Habbakuk, iii, 17.
[3] Deuteronomy, viii, 8.

by the hand of nature alone; and I observed in this respect, that the olives are never cut in any part of Palestine. Some of these trees were dry and withered, while others of them were surrounded with straw and bands of cloth. The cause of this I learned from Mr. Miolant, who informed me that it often happened that the inhabitants of the villages quarrelled, and for the sake of revenge endeavoured to destroy each other's property. They take advantage of the night to make incisions in the trunks of the best olive-trees, which deprives them of their sap."[1] From the above extract, we learn not only that the olive-trees of Judea are fewer, but less fruitful than they once were. Of the olives in the plain of Sharon, Volney says that "they are daily perishing through age, the ravages of contending factions, and even from secret mischief." The same traveller informs us that they are sometimes cut down for fuel.[2] The accounts of Mariti and Volney are confirmed by Dr. Bowring, in his 'Report on the Commercial Statistics of Syria,' which has just been issued. He tells us, that at most the olive-trees yield an abundant crop every other year, and that their supply is precarious; so much so, that sometimes a good crop is obtained but once in four years.[3] The decay of the olive, as well as the importance of its culture as a branch of industry, may be inferred from another fact, communicated by Dr. Bowring, that Ibrahim Pasha has made arrangements for improving and extending the cultivation of this tree in Syria—a hint which we trust will not be lost on the

[1] Mariti, vol. ii, p. 253. [2] Volney, vol. ii, pp. 216, 217.
[3] Rep. Com. Stat. of Syria, p. 16.

future possessors of this country, whoever they may be. The decay into which the cultivation of the olive has fallen, the decrease of its productive powers, and the secret injuries to which it is constantly exposed, and by which the most valuable of these trees are often destroyed, afford a clear fulfilment of the words of Moses. *Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts; but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit.*[1]

The desolation of the vine was likewise foretold; and the fulfilment of the prophecy forms a marked feature of the modern Palestine. *I will destroy her vines and her fig-trees.*[2] Isaiah beautifully predicts the regret with which, in the decay of the vine, the inhabitants should remember the former joyous seasons of the vintage. *Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women; for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come. They shall lament for the teats, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.*[3] The ancient Palestine was eminently a land of vines. Moses celebrates it in his song as "a land of corn and wine."[4] If we except the valley of Jericho, the great heat of which appears not to have been propitious to this plant, every part of the country, from the summits of Lebanon to the southern frontier, was adapted for its cultivation. But it appears to have been on the hills of Judah that the vine reached its highest excellence. As the mountains of Ephraim were covered with the olive, so those of Judah with the vine—agreeably to the blessing of Jacob. Not, however, to the exclu-

[1] Deuteronomy, xxviii, 40.
[2] Hoshea, ii, 12.
[3] Isaiah, xxxii, 10, 12.
[4] Deuteronomy, xxxiii, 28.

sion of other parts of the country; for Lebanon could boast of its vines as well as of its cedars.[1] Still it was within the limits of the portion of Judah that the principal wine localities were found—Sorek and Eschol. The method of cultivation was adapted to the situation of the plant. On the terraces, which were used chiefly for this kind of husbandry, the vines were low, and yielded the finest wines. In other situations, they were encouraged to grow to a greater height, being supported by poles, or taught to twine their tendrils round the trunk and branches of trees. Sometimes it was planted beside the dwelling of the Israelite; and rising up into the stature of a tree, and covering the roof with its shoots and branches, the owner "sat under his vine and under his fig-tree." As the cultivation of the vine was one of the most important of the labours of the husbandman, so the vintage was the most joyous season which came round to the ancient Hebrew. But what a change has now taken place in this land. The culture of this generous plant, and the joy of those who tread the wine-press, is to a great degree at an end. Remains of the ancient vineyards still linger around Hebron and in the neighbourhood of Sorek; but in other parts of the land the vine is to be met with only in some of the more cultivated valleys, or on a chance terrace on the hill-side. The same mountains which in other days "were covered with the shadow of it," are now bare. The prevalence of the Mohammedan religion, by the rules of which the Moslem is forbidden either to drink wine himself or to make it for the use of others, has led to its uni-

[1] Hoshea, xiv, 7. "The scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon."

versal neglect: and in the great scarcity of fuel in Palestine, the trunks of old and decayed vines are not unfrequently used for this purpose. "*The women come and set them on fire.*" [1] The cultivation and use of the vine is practised chiefly at this day by the Roman Catholic inhabitants of Lebanon; but even there, as Carne informs us, though the vineyards are numerous, very little wine is drank. The villagers carry the grapes as a kind of tribute or present to their rulers; for though the Moslem may not drink wine, he is allowed the use of grapes. It would thus appear that the vineyards, which were anciently cultivated by the Jews, have descended to other possessors with the curse resting upon them. *Thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof.*[2] *Ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but shalt not drink wine of them.*[3]

It is difficult to ascertain the real character of the present wines of Judea; but it seems to be generally conceded, that they are considerably inferior to those of former times. This is owing, not to any deterioration in the qualities of the vine itself, or to any inadequacy of the soil and climate to the produce of this fruit in modern times, but to a vicious method employed in the manufacture of the wine. Dr. Bowring says little regarding the wines of Syria; but that little confirms what we have stated regarding the decay of the vine and the inferior quality of the wines. "Wine might become an important article, both for consumption and export, in Syria (as it anciently was). Some of the convents of Mount Lebanon produce it of excellent quality, known by

[1] Isaiah, xxvii, 11. [2] Deuteronomy, xxviii, 30.
[3] Amos, v, 11.

the name of the 'vino d'or.'[1] It is both white and red, and when properly attended to, is very superior. But the habit of boiling wine is almost universal, and destroys its character. The use of skins, as in ancient times, is very unfriendly to the preservation of the finer characteristics."[2] From all we have said of the past and present state of the vine of Judea, it appears that the prophecy which foretold its decay, has been fulfilled. *The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth.*[3] *I will surely consume them, saith the Lord. There shall be no grapes on the vine nor figs on the fig-tree, and the leaf shall fade, and the things that I have given them shall pass away from them.*[4] *They shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing. And in all vineyards shall be wailing.*[5]

Neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.[6] We have already stated incidentally several facts which form a clear fulfilment of this prophecy. The fruit of the palm seldom comes to maturity. The olive yields a good crop, but once in the two years at most, and sometimes only once in

[1] Golden wine.—The wine properly so called is yellow; hence the name, which the doctor here appears to apply both to the white and red wines. Besides being boiled in the manufacture, as the Doctor mentions above, the vine is not pruned—a circumstance which must be detrimental to the quality of the crop. The wines of Lebanon are of three kinds, the white, the yellow, and the red. The white is rather bitter; the yellow and red are too sweet; but if the red is not boiled, it is equal almost to that of Bordeaux. The wine of that country is not good as a common drink at meals, because it ferments on the stomach. Perhaps in these facts we behold the fulfilment of the prophecy—"Strong drink shall be bitter unto them that drink it."

[2] Bowring, p. 17. [3] Isaiah, xxiv, 7.

[4] Jeremiah, viii, 13. [5] Amos, v, 16, 17. [6] Isa. vii, 24.

the four years. The sloth of the inhabitants does not allow them to prune the vine; and this diminishes the amount, as well as deteriorates the quality of its produce.

Bereft of her vines and olives, it was foretold that the land should be covered with briers and thorns. *All the land shall become briers and thorns.*[1] At this day the thistle is the most common product of the soil of Judea. All her plains and valleys are disfigured with this unseemly and unproductive plant. It is most abundant on the best soils. On the plains south of Jaffa, Richardson says that "the plantations of thistles are quite as numerous as the fields of grain."[2] In the list furnished by Hasselquist, of the plants found growing in the narrow valley of Jeremiah, which it will be remembered is on the road from Ramla to Jerusalem, we find not fewer than six species of the thistle.[3] Of the plain of Sharon Chateaubriand says,—"This soil exhibits on every side nothing but thistles, dry and withered grass, interspersed with scanty plantations of cotton and patches of doura."[4] *Sharon is like a wilderness.* In crossing the country from Samaria to Mount Carmel, Lindsay says,—"Nothing could exceed the richness of the soil or the beauty of its produce, even of the thistles, with which every fallow and uncultivated field was overgrown, of the deepest blue and most luxuriant growth, often overtopping my head on horseback."[5] The same plant, equal in stature and abundance, covers the fine plain

[1] Isaiah, vii, 24.
[2] Richardson, vol. ii, p. 207.
[3] Hasselquist, p. 280.
[4] Chateaubriand, vol. i, p. 315.
[5] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 77.

of Acre. And Clarke was often struck with the beauty and variety in which he found it growing in all the vales of Galilee.[1] The thorn is also very abundant in Palestine. The sides of the hills in several places are covered with valonidis and prickly oaks.[2] On the west of the mountains which bound on that side the lake of Tiberias, "the whole district," says Burckhardt, "is covered with the thorny shrub Merar." He mentions also the wild artichoke, a thorny plant, there called khob, as abounding both east and west of the Jordan.[3] The rest-barrow (ononis spinosa)," says Hasselquist, "that most pernicious and prickly plant, covers entire fields and plains in Egypt and Palestine."[4] It thus appears, that on the plain the grain and oliveyards have given place to crops of thistles, and on the hills the brier has supplanted the vine. *And it shall come to pass at that day, that every place shall be where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverings, it shall even be for briers and thorns.*[5] *And now go to, I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor digged, but there shall come up briers and thorns.*[6]

The coast of Palestine is now reduced to the state which the prophets foretold. *I will destroy the remnant of the sea-coast.*[7] The threatening applies especially to the seaward border of the Philistines—from Joppa south to the desert; but the ruin with which it menaced their maritime possessions has

[1] Clarke, vol. iv, pp. 127, 128.
[2] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 77.
[3] Burckhardt, p. 333.
[4] Hasselquist, p. 289.
[5] Isaiah, vii, 23.
[6] Isaiah, v, 5, 6.
[7] Ezekiel, xxv, 16.

fallen upon the whole coast of Syria. The cultivation of the shore is gone, and the commerce of the seas is at an end. The great nations of antiquity lay around the Mediterranean, and accordingly the cities on the coast of Phœnecia and Palestine were the most important in the world in point of trade. Among these we may mention as the more celebrated Joppa, long the principal port of the Jews—Cesarea, which was built by Herod in the latter days of the Jewish state, and formed the most commodious harbour in Palestine—Acre, on the north of the bay of that name, the Accho of the Old Testament and the Ptolemais of the New. And farther north, Tyre and Sidon, the two most renowned commercial cities in the ancient world. Such were the princely towns which in the time of the prophets occupied the shore, and attracted to their harbours the ships of all nations. But how has the prophecy been fulfilled! At this day the trade of the Levant is exceedingly insignificant, and its great commercial towns have fallen into utter decay. Jaffa is a poor and insignificant place, with a bad harbour. Cesarea is an utter ruin. Beneath the waves adjoining the shore are still to be seen the remains of the vast mole which Herod erected as a breakwater. The town of Acre is strongly fortified; but its harbour is shallow, and admits only vessels of small burden.[1] The site of Tyre, "the crowning city, whose merchants were princes, whose traffickers were the honourable of the earth," has long been occupied by a few fishermen's huts, which have grown of late into a small, irregular, and wretched town. Situated at

[1] Robinson, vol. i, p. 198.

the termination of the long low sandy isthmus, which connects the ancient island with the main land, the village at a distance appears to repose on the bosom of the ocean.[1] It struggles to maintain a feeble trade, which, by reminding the visitor of the grandeur of its ancient commerce, impresses him more forcibly with its present degradation than would its entire abandonment to utter ruin.[2] When Stephens visited this place, "a single fishing-boat" was lying in what was once the first harbour of the world.[3] From Tyre north to Sidon, the coast is covered with the ruins of towns and ports. The timber which grew on the adjoining heights of Lebanon formed an important article in the trade of the ancient Sidonians, and being brought down from the mountain, was shipped at these harbours,—now utterly ruined. Sidon is still a town of some importance, and carries on a little traffic with the neighbouring coasts. The harbour is nearly choked up with sand. Such is the present ruinous state of the shores of Palestine and Phenicia. The cities are gone, or subsist in a condition which renders them "the ghost of what they were." The numerous, wealthy,

[1] Even Volney, as he passed the low peninsula which once served the Queen of Commerce as a throne, while the ocean around was her empire, and saw it tenanted by "only fifty or sixty poor families, who live but indifferently on the produce of their little grounds and a trifling fishery," could not resist quoting Ezekiel's magnificent prediction of the fall of Tyre. He gives it as a "historical fragment still extant!" Yes, it has survived Tyre, although written when her "wares went forth out of the midst of the seas," to fill "many people," and to enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of "her riches" and of her "merchandise."

[2] Our subject does not lead us to speak further of Tyre. The fall of this city was foretold in the most circumstantial terms by Ezekiel, when she was in the height of her prosperity. Bishop Newton has shown how exactly it has been fulfilled.—Ezekiel, xxvi, xxvii, xxviii.

[3] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 356.

and luxurious population of other days has disappeared; and in many instances the few miserable and famished beings who remain, live in the vaults of the ruined houses of the former inhabitants. The multitude of ships of all countries, which covered their seas and crowded their harbours, have passed away; and it is rare that the ocean is enlivened with a sail. Few visit their coast, unless the solitary traveller, who surveys with awe the fragments of the magnificent structures of former ages. This extensive theatre of ancient commerce is now abandoned to shepherds, whose tents and flocks cover the plains, which in other days were richly cultivated and planted with towns. *The sea-coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds and folds for flocks.*[1]

The decay of her commerce leads us to speak of the ruinous state of the roads of Palestine. In this too we behold the fulfilment of prophecy. *Your highways shall be desolate.*[2] "Among the precious remains of antiquity," says Reland, "which have come down to our times, I account not the least valuable three Roman itineraries."[3] From these itineraries Reland has compiled a list of roads, forty-two in number, intersecting the country of Judea in various directions. Four great highways, leading from Jerusalem in four different directions, connected the capital with the cities in all parts of the country. That on the west extended to Joppa and Cæsarea. From this main trunk numerous branches ran off, communicating with the towns on the great plain of

[1] Zephaniah, ii, 6. [2] Leviticus, xxvi, 22.
[3] Relandi Palæst. Illust., tom. i, p. 415.

Sharon, some descending the coast by Askelon and Gaza; whilst others ran up on the north by Carmel and the Phenician territory. The path which led from Jerusalem on the east, after traversing the mountains, conducted the passenger down into the valley of Jericho, and placed him on the great road which ascended the plain, connecting the towns of the southern Judea with the populous districts lying around the lake of Tiberias, and the fertile and ample regions on the east of the Jordan. On the north the intercourse between Jerusalem and the wealthy cities of Galilee was carried on by means of the highway which led from the capital through the country of Samaria. Thus we read that Christ, when going to Galilee with his disciples, "must needs pass through Samaria." While on the south the great road which communicated with the towns in the hill-country of Judah extended to Gaza, and finally into Egypt. Another line of communication, though of less note, appears to have led from Jerusalem by the southern extremity of the Dead sea. All these roads had radiating points, from which subordinate lines ran off in all directions, so that every town and village in Judea was connected with the capital.[1] In the valley of the Jordan, for instance, the remains of the ancient road which led from Jericho through the mountains in a north-west direction to Bethel, are still visible, with water-cisterns at regular distances.[2] The highways of Israel are alluded to for the first time, in the beautiful song

[1] For the facts stated above relating to the "viæ publicæ" of Palestine, we refer generally to Reland.—Palæst. Illust., tom. i, lib. ii, cap. iii and iv.

[2] Amer. Bib. Rep. Series ii, vol. i, p. 420.

of Deborah, and are there mentioned as existing in the days of Shamgar, one of the early judges; but there can be no doubt that it was under the Romans they were brought to the high state of perfection which they appear to have reached, from the accounts which remain of them.[1] And what is now the condition of the highways of Israel? Four thousand years ago, before the tribes acquired possession of the country, Moses foretold that they should "be desolate." And at this day they are literally blotted out. Unless in rare instances, no marks remain of their having ever existed. The ancient "highways of Israel" are to be traced on the Roman tables, not on the soil of Judea. Of the Phenician highway, Maundrell informs us that some vestiges remain. The same traveller discovered traces of the road which led from Jerusalem to Gaza, which appears in some places to have been hewn in the rock with great labour. Remains of the road which led from the southern towns of Judah to the region of Tiberias are still to be seen in the plain of Jericho, with Roman mile-stones upon it.[2] And only the other day professor Robinson discovered traces of the highway which connected Jerusalem with Joppa and Cesarea on the coast, and which appears, after crossing the plain of Sharon, to have traversed the mountains to Bethoron, and from this point descended on the north of Jerusalem.[3] This must have been a great thoroughfare anciently, seeing it lay

[1] With regard to one class of cities—those of refuge—the Israelites were enjoined in their law to make roads leading to them, and to keep them in repair.—Deuteronomy, xix, 3.

[2] Irby and Mangles, p. 301.

[3] Amer. Bib. Rep., Series ii, vol. i, p. 427.

between the coast and the capital; but for ages it has not only been unused, but unknown—travellers having commonly mistaken the mule-path, which leads in a direct line through the mountains from Jaffa to Jerusalem, for the ancient highway. The character of this route renders it sufficiently certain that it cannot have been the line of the ancient road. All the routes through Palestine at this day are simply mule-paths, leading in many cases over the summit of steep hills, or along the edge of frightful precipices, and covered generally with large stones, some of them, says Wolff, "of the size of a ton weight." In such places they are passable only to the practised foot of the mule and dromedary.[1] "Generally speaking," says Bowring, "the roads of Syria are in a deplorable condition; in the rainy season, indeed, travelling is almost impossible. I understand the roads are scarcely, if ever, repaired.[2] Wheel carriages of course cannot be employed."[3]

The way-faring man ceaseth.[4] The internal intercourse of Judea anciently must have been great—great when the prophecy we have just quoted was given, and still greater after it became a Roman province, from its more intimate connection with other coun-

[1] So far as we are aware, there is not in existence any map of Palestine exhibiting the ancient roads. The only thing of the kind we have seen is the small table in Reland. A map of this sort is a great desideratum, and might easily be constructed from a careful study of those chapters of Reland which treat of the ancient roads of Palestine, compared with the report of professor Robinson.

[2] The caphar which the Arabs often exact from travellers was originally imposed by the Christian kings of Jerusalem, for the purpose of clearing the country of banditti, and repairing the roads. The tribute continues to be levied, although, it is needless to say, it is no longer devoted to its original purpose.

[3] Rep. Com. Stat. of Syria, p. 46. [4] Isaiah, xxxiii, 8.

tries, and the numerous strangers by whom it then began to be visited. When we take into account the innumerable population of the ancient Palestine, we can easily imagine the living stream which must have perpetually circulated through all parts of the country—from the capital, westward to the cities on the plain of Sharon; or northward to the numerous towns and villages of Galilee. The cities on the south poured the tide of their population through the valley of Jericho to the country of Gennesareth and the Decapolis on the east of the river as ceaselessly as the Jordan rolled its waters along the same plain. Three times every year the solemn festivals called all the males of Israel to Jerusalem from the remotest parts of the country; and on such occasions the concourse was swelled by strangers from the most distant regions. At that period the settlements of the Jews extended over Asia Minor, Italy, Egypt, and countries still more remote; and in many cases the expatriated Israelite left his distant home once a year to appear before the Lord in that place "whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." But now this great concourse has been cut off. The high-ways are untrodden; and were Deborah to arise again, she might bewail their desolation with even more truth than of old.[1] In this coun-

[1] "In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways." Judges, v, 6. In the confusion of the times, the country appears to have swarmed with banditti, who lay in wait for the traveller on the high-road. To avoid the snare, he "walked through byways"—a practice to which the traveller at this day often has recourse for the very same reason. The state of the country, under the oppression of Jabin, appears to have resembled what it now is under that of the Turks.

try, at present, the single traveller, whether on business or amusement is never seen. Those wishing to explore the country must either assume the dress and manners of the natives, or wait till they are joined by a considerable party; and even then it may be deemed prudent to provide a military escort. "In travelling from Ramah to Jerusalem," says Dr. Shaw, "where, exclusive of three or four hundred spahees, four bands of Turkish infantry, with the mosolom or general at the head of them, were not able, or durst not, at least, protect us from the repeated insults, ravages, and barbarities of the Arabs. There was scarcely a pilgrim, and we were upwards of six thousand, who did not suffer either by losing a part of his clothes or his money; and, when these failed, then the barbarians took their revenge by unmercifully beating us with their pikes and javelins. It would be too tedious to relate the many instances of that day's rapine and cruelty."[1] Thus the way-faring man ceaseth. Of late, however, these dangers and annoyances are less frequent; the severe despotism of Ibrahim Pacha has at least had the good effect of extending to the traveller in Judea something like protection. Should he receive any insult he has only to complain to the provincial governor and every effort will be made to discover and punish the perpetrator.

Were we to be told that a time would come when no roads and no travellers should exist in Britain, how improbable would it appear? At the time that a similar prediction was given regarding the land of Israel, its fulfilment was much more improbable con-

[1] Shaw. Preface, p. 10.

sidering the central position of Judea; yet how completely is the prophecy now fulfilled: *The highways lie waste; the way-faring man ceaseth.*

We shall now turn our attention to the various changes which Judea has undergone, and the character of the successive governments under which she has existed, for the purpose of enquiring whether the prophecy has, in this respect, been fulfilled. *I will give it into the hands of the strangers for a prey. Destruction cometh, and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none. Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour.*[1] Since the hour the temple fell, the history of the country is a continued series of disasters. Seldom has plague or famine or war been absent from her borders; and how often do we find her suffering from all these scourges combined. The various masters, under whose yoke she has successively passed, have studied only to oppress her. When the government of her own princes came to an end, she was converted into a Roman province. From the Romans she passed under the dominion of the Persians. She soon, however, returned to her former masters, under whose authority she continued till the seventh century, when she was finally wrested from the successors of the Cæsars by the arms of the Saracens. In the beginning of the twelfth century her fields were desolated by the soldiers of Europe, who, impelled by a furious zeal, rushed to Palestine to rescue, as they said, the country from the infidels, but in reality to accomplish the woes which prophecy denounced against that unhappy land; and to Judea the religious

[1] Ezekiel, vii, 21, 25, 26.

bigotry of the West was as fatal as the keen sabres and fiery valour of the East. The fury of the crusades in due time exhausted itself; but the hour of peace and security came not to this torn and distracted land. The measure of her woes was not yet full. After the Christians were driven out of her, more ruthless conquerors appeared upon the stage. Judea now fell under the dominion of the Mamlouks of Egypt. From their hands she passed, in 1516, into the possession of Selim, emperor of the Ottoman Turks, whose sword extended the limits of his kingdom to the Libyan desert. Under the sultans of this race has Judea continued for upwards of three hundred years, with no interruption save what has been occasioned from time to time by the insurrections of rebellious pachas.[1] The facts we have stated offer a clear fulfilment of the prophecy. Rumour has followed rumour; destruction has come upon destruction. No sooner has one cloud discharged its "pitiless shower" of ills, than another of seven-fold blackness has gathered in the sky. Of the land, as well as of the people, we may say, in the words of Moses, "Thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway."

I will give it to the wicked of the earth for a spoil, and they shall pollute it.[2] This prediction has as-

[1] Every pacha who has attempted to erect an independent kingdom in Syria in opposition to the Porte has ultimately failed. The cause of this uniform bad success is to be found, not in any peculiar affection cherished by the people for the Turkish government, but in the despotic policy pursued by the pachas, which has alienated those on whom alone they could rely for support in throwing off the yoke of the sultan. The people generally have preferred being fleeced by a great rather than a small tyrant. The same cause has proved more fatal to the dominion of Mehemet Ali in Syria than the armies of Europe.

[2] Ezekiel, vii, 21.

suredly been fulfilled. When we review the long catalogue of masters under whose power Judea has fallen, we know not one of them to whom the epithet, "wicked," does not apply, and who have not acted as the prophecy foretold they would—"spoiled" the land by their oppression, and "polluted" it by their crimes. Since the hour the sun of her freedom set, the baleful stars of tyranny and superstition have beamed upon her from a darkened sky. Where shall we find more fitting terms than those the prophet has furnished us with, by which to designate the government under which she presently exists—perhaps the most unprincipled, tyrannical, and avaricious on the face of the earth.[1] In other countries the end of government is to maintain order, to encourage industry, to punish fraud, to repress crime, to reward obedience; but here government exists for no end apparently but to oppress and plunder those over whom it rules. Its head resides at Constantinople; and over each district is set a pacha. The appointment is given to the highest bidder;[2] and, as gain is the only motive which leads any one to assume the office, and, as the term during which it may be exercised is short, the pacha endeavours to reap in a day the fruit of years. He regards the country he governs as his own private property, and his subjects as his slaves. His soldiers are ready to execute any command however cruel or rapacious; and though often guilty of the greatest atrocities, the seat of the

[1] If this be thought too strong, we beg to refer to Volney's chapter (23) on the Turkish government in Syria.

[2] One qualification only is necessary for all offices under the Turkish government, and that one qualification is expressed in one term—money.

supreme authority is too remote, the influence of the pacha in his own district, as well as at the head of government, is too great to allow of any one, however grievously he may have been wronged, bringing him to justice. The result of this tyranny on agriculture and trade is just what might have been expected; it has reduced them to the lowest state compatible with the existence of the beings who live on the soil. The husbandman sows only what may suffice to feed him, and the artisan performs only so much work as may preserve his family from starving. To carry their efforts beyond this limit were only to labour for their oppressor. "O fatal despotism," exclaims Mariti, when surveying the waste which Sharon now exhibits, "thou causest sterility where nature placed abundance; thou enchainest the faculties of man, and buriest population in the bosom of the earth!" [1] Volney has confirmed the prophet in a very remarkable manner. *I will give it to the wicked of the earth for a spoil*, said the prophet. The Turks, says the traveller, consider "the country only as the *spoil* of a conquered enemy." [2]

An individual picture always affects us more than a general statement—the atrocities of one man than the atrocities of a thousand continued through as many years—we shall therefore present the reader with a brief sketch of one of the officers of this "wicked" government. The name we are about to mention was long the terror of Palestine, and was well known to every traveller in the east; and certainly no ordinary measure of wickedness could have gained so great distinction in so long and dark a list

[1] Mariti, vol. ii, p. 251. [2] Volney, vol. ii, p. 243.

of tyrants, for the name of Djezzar Pacha. The term signifies the "Butcher;" and this not very enviable title he acquired by his manifold barbarities and murders. He was originally a Mamlouke slave; and having, not by the most honourable services, ingratiated himself with the Porte, he rose by degrees to the pachalic of Acre, which he held for a long period. Of this tyrant we may say in the brief and emphatic terms in which Tacitus sums up the character of another oppressor, who ruled in the same country eighteen hundred years before, though not for so long a period as Djezzar,—

Jus regium servili ingenio exercuit.[1]

The attendants, who waited on him in his tower at Acre, bore on their persons the evident marks of the ferocious and savage disposition of their master, being frightfully disfigured and mutilated. He attended faithfully to the public interest so far as his narrow views taught him that it coincided with his own. He built large granaries but neglected the improvement of agriculture. Though his jealousy of his subjects rendered him cautious in going abroad, his cavalry scoured the country, levying the tribute of their master, and committing any atrocity he was pleased to enjoin. The limits of his extensive pachalic, which included great part of the Holy Land, might be easily known by the air of gloom and desolation with which it was overspread. Sometimes he went out in disguise, attended by an executioner; if he happened to surprise any one in what he accounted

[1] Felix, before whom Paul appeared. "He wielded the power of a king with the mind of a slave."—Tac. Hist. lib. v, cap. 9.

a fault, he pronounced sentence on him immediately. The criminal bowed his neck; the executioner struck, and the head fell. This tyrant, who died not many years ago, at nearly the age of eighty, is still remembered in Acre, in the streets of which some of the miserable beings whom he mutilated may yet be seen. In the rapid exaltation of this oppressor from the base condition of a slave, and in the long list of extortions which he committed, and which fell heavily on the few Jews who dwell at this day in the country, we see the fulfilment of the prophecy, *The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. He shall be the head and thou shalt be the tail.*[1]

Of late the government of Palestine has undergone a change, but a change of such a nature as to show that the prophecy is still fulfilling. The pacha of Egypt, Mehemet Ali, having conceived the project of throwing off the dominion of the Porte, in 1831 transported into Syria a large body of troops under the command of his son, Ibrahim Pacha. Ibrahim dispersed the forces of the sultan in several pitched battles; overran Syria; marched to Constantinople; and threatened the very existence of the Porte. A treaty was signed at Kutiah in 1833, whereby the government of the whole of Syria was ceded to the pacha of Egypt; and the only mark of his dependence on the sultan was a stipulated yearly payment of thirty-five thousand purses, a sum amounting to a hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds.[2]

[1] Deuteronomy, xxviii, 43. Jowett's 'Christian Researches in Syria and the Holy Land,' p. 150. Lond. 1826.

[2] Bowring's Rep., p. 25.—Mr. Farren states it at L.30,000, which is obviously incorrect.

This change has brought no relief to the inhabitants. If their Turkish rulers chastised them with whips, their Egyptian masters have chastised them with scorpions. The old taxes have been nearly doubled, and additional ones have been imposed. A personal tax, called *ferde*, is now levied from every male above the age of fourteen. The tax varies from fifteen to five hundred piastres, according to the supposed circumstances of the individual.[1] It is with the Egyptian *ferde*, as with the Turkish *miri*,[2] each district must continue to yield the same amount as when the tax was first imposed; no allowance is made for emigration or death, and thus the *ferde* is often increased exhorbitantly on individuals. The extortions of the petty governors have been put an end to by the Egyptian government; but illegal acts are frequently committed by the government itself, more oppressive and impoverishing than the petty tyranny which it put down. The inhabitants are often obliged to sell their wheat, timber, and oil to the pacha below their price. Their horses and mules are often pressed into the service of the army without any adequate return for their use; and common artizans are taken, in rotation, from their families, and compelled to labour in the government works at less than half the rate payable for free labour.

But the severest measure of Egyptian tyranny is the conscription. The Syrian peasant's cup of suffering was already full—this was the drop which caused it to overflow. The day when the new levy

[1] Five hundred piastres, or a purse, amount to £5 sterling.

[2] The miri is the tax which the Turks laid on each fedhan of land when they conquered the country. It was light at first, but is now very heavy owing to the progressive depopulation of the country, combined with the absurd law referred to in the text.

is to be made is kept secret; but a Friday is generally chosen, being the Sabbath of the Moslem. Parties of soldiers having been previously distributed in the various quarters of the city, a gun is fired as a signal. Scarcely has its sound died away when the soldiers rush upon the citizens, who are crowding to the mosques. Those whom they are able to enclose are driven away like cattle, and shut up in the great square of the Serai. After being examined by the army physician, if not physically disqualified, they are drafted into the regiments.[1]

It is impossible to describe the grief and consternation which reign over the whole country at the periods of these forced levies. It is seldom that one day suffices to raise the requisite amount of men, and, while the conscription is going on, the trade and agriculture of the country are completely suspended. The inhabitants of the towns and villages flee to the mountains, the ploughs are forsaken, and even the mule-driver, leaving his goods on the highway, seeks safety in flight. Between those on whom the conscription happens to fall, and the

[1] The exhaustion of the population occasioned by the conscription effectually checks all tendency to improvement. "In scarcely any parts of the rural districts are hands enough left to cultivate the soil. Almost all the young and strong male population has been drafted into the Nizam, and there were some villages in which a fourth of the inhabitants had been so taken possession of. We found this the universal subject of complaint. In northern Syria, when the orders for seizing the conscripts came from the Egyptian government, multitudes passed into the Turkish dominions; and again, when the decrees for seizure emanated from Constantinople, the tide of emigration flowed into the Syrian districts. Sometimes the conscription was carried on on both sides, and the men fled to the desert or the mountains; to any sufferings or dangers for the chance of escape from military service. .....The service is for an unlimited period."—Bowring's Report, p. 26.

relatives from whom they are thus suddenly torn away, the most heart-rending scenes ensue. "Within the enclosure," says Mr. Farren, "which files of armed troops surround, the wretched victims are crowded together, bowed down with despair, while, pressing upon every avenue, their wives and daughters and aged mothers may be seen, wildly darting their frenzied glances through the captives in search of a missing relative, or bursting into paroxysms of despair on beholding the lost objects of their fears; and all around the air is rent by the cries of these unfortunates, cursing, as I have heard them, the very name of their prophet, and invoking the Deity himself to avenge the cause of the poor and the oppressed."[1] Thus the prophecy is still fulfilling on this unhappy land. *I will give it into the hands of strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil.*

We have mentioned the tyranny of the Turks as one cause of the present desolation of the country; to this we have to add another, equal in magnitude to the former, namely, the rapacity of the Arabs. The occupation of the country by this people was clearly foretold: *The robbers shall enter into it, and defile it.*[2] *The spoilers are come upon all high places through the wilderness.*[3] Since the days of their father, Ishmael, the Arabians have inhabited the wilderness on the south and east of Judea. In

[1] Mr. Farren's Letter. Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 297. For the facts stated above, we refer generally to Mr. Farren's Letter. We have spoken of what *was* the state of matters under Mehemet Ali; it is probable that at this moment the authority of the Pacha has no existence in Syria. Whether, after eighteen centuries of oppression, that land is now to enjoy rest, remains to be seen. If it shall do so, it assuredly will not be under a Mohammedan government. [2] Ezekiel, vii, 22. [3] Jeremiah, xii, 12.

the depth of their deserts they have maintained their simplicity of manners, their national independence, and those hostile and predatory habits by which they were characterized in the earliest age. "And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." [1] The nature of their country has not allowed them to acquire or practise the art of agriculture; but in no age have they been slow to profit by the industry of their neighbours. When the lands around were richly cultivated, they would often descend upon them with the rapidity of a tempest, and, after lading themselves with spoil, perform an equally speedy retreat into the desert, the sands of which effectually cut off all pursuit. But after Judea and the adjacent countries lost their inhabitants, these hordes poured into them, and now consider them as their own. They are spread over all Syria. Their tents are often seen on Lebanon, in the valley of Baalbec, on the Hauran, and even on the fine plain of Damascus; but the tribes by whom Judea is possessed are the most savage and predatory of the Arabian race—the Bedouins. The term is but another name for robber. Sometimes they plunder in bands; sometimes singly. They lie often in wait for the traveller; but the peasant is eminently their prey. They come by night and carry off his camels and flocks; in spring they watch for his appearance on the field, to rob him of his seed. To guard against this evil, he carries but little out into the field, and that little he sows armed. In harvest he often reaps his crop before it is ripened,

[1] Genesis, xvi, 12.

to prevent being anticipated by the Bedouin. The whole of Judea has been turned into pasture ground by this race. In summer they retire to the mountains, in winter they descend on the plains, and when the grass is exhausted in one place, they drive their flocks to another pasture and another spring. The prophet could not have described more accurately the effects which these shepherds or pastors produce upon the land, although he had actually seen their black tents clustered on its plains, and their flocks ranging over its hills, than he has done in the following words: "Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart."[1] Never did any land groan under two greater evils; never were there such oppressors as the Turks, or such plunderers as the Arabs; and never would so rich a country as Palestine have realized the awful picture of desolation, which the prophets exhibited had it not been subjected to these terrible scourges.[2]

The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof.[3] It was foretold that the *wicked*, into whose hands it should be given for a *spoil*, would *pollute it*, and that the *robbers* who were to enter into it should *defile it*.[4] The *moral* change which this land has undergone is greater than the *physical*. The neglected fields of the modern Palestine do not form a more striking contrast to the well cultivated plains and vine-clad hills of the ancient Judea than

[1] Jer., xii, 10, 11.
[2] See Note E.
[3] Isaiah, xxiv, 5.
[4] Ezekiel, vii, 21, 22.

do the brutish ignorance, the superstition, and crime of its present inhabitants, to the comparatively pure life and enlightened faith of its ancient people. From former remembrances we still call it the "Holy Land;" but it has retained the name long after it has lost all title to it. It is peopled at present by three sects—the Mohammedan, the Roman Catholic, and the Jew; a fierce zeal animates each in behalf of his peculiar creed; but all are alike fallen from the knowledge and practice of revealed truth. Their bitter animosities, childish superstitions, ridiculous, and sometimes indecent ceremonies, and the cheats which the priests put upon their respective worshippers; the dishonesty practised in trade, the thefts and murders of the Arabs, the unblushing sale of justice, and the open oppression of the government, form a tissue of crime in which all classes are involved, and which has rendered that land infamous in the eyes of civilized nations, and defiled it in the sight of heaven.[1]

Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness.[2] The traveller in

[1] The American missionaries have laboured abundantly in Lebanon especially to introduce Christianity,—Fisk, Parsons, Goodel, King, Shauffler (a German), and others. It is only a just tribute to these men to say that they were highly accomplished, (surpassing in this respect those of any other nation who ever visited in this capacity that part of the world,) and in point of zeal indefatigable; but their success was very small. Fisk sleeps in a garden at Beyroot, Parsons too is gone, and the cry of the muezzin sounds over their graves; but we trust the seed they were honoured to sow shall yet appear. In Palestine the missionary is met by the pride of sect, and long established and inveterate prejudices. These are almost insurmountable obstacles; and it may be easier to introduce the gospel into a country where the Christian name has hitherto been unknown, than into this land—the cradle of our religion, and the theatre of the life and miracles and death of the Son of God.

[2] Jeremiah, vii, 34.

this land is never regaled as he passes along with the song of the villager or the pipe of the shepherd. By day a melancholy silence reigns over the country, and at night nothing is heard save the cries of jackalls, and other beasts of prey, which lodge in the ruins. *The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.*[1] The decay of this science is the more remarkable, considering the ardour with which it was anciently cultivated in Palestine. Perhaps no nation was ever more passionately addicted to the study of music than the Hebrews: they were skilled alike in the construction and the use of musical instruments. At their feasts music was never absent, and it formed a part even of the solemn worship of the temple; but now the mirth of the tabret and the joy of the harp have ceased. As to instrumental music, it is never heard; unless, perchance, in some of the mountain-glens of Lebanon; and, as to the vocal music of Palestine, we may judge of its charms from the following statement: "A schoolmaster afterwards came in," says Wolff, "and after the usual lengthy salutions, he sat down and broke forth into singing, in which all the company joined as well as they could. Such singing no words can describe—so nasal, so tuneless, and discordant; they informed us that it was the song of the angels."[2] "The age of the caliphs is past among the Arabs," says Volney, "and yet to begin among the Turks. These two nations have at present neither geometricians, astronomers, musicians, nor physicians."[3] The only education which

[1] Isaiah, xxiv, 8. [2] Wolff's Journal, p. 195.
[3] Volney, vol. ii, p. 294.

the people receive is to read the Koran, if Mohammedans; and the Psalms, if Roman Catholics. *It is a people of no understanding.*[1]

All the merry-hearted do sigh. All joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.[2] This is another effect of the despotism under which they groan, and another particular in which we can trace the fulfilment of prophecy. Of the joy of former times several brief descriptions have been left us both by sacred and profane writers. In this land, anciently, every man dwelt under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none made him afraid. At eventide, he went out into the field to meditate: At noon, as he reposed from his labours, he opened the book of the law, and recounted to the assembled members of his family the wonders God had wrought for their nation of old, and the statutes and promises which he had given to Israel. The ploughman relieved his toils by singing; and the labours of the reaper and vine-dresser were prosecuted with the voice of psalms.[3] But this picture of calm and sanctified enjoyment exists no longer in Palestine. Every traveller is struck with the gloomy countenance and joyless life of the Oriental. Rarely do the clouds pass away from the one, and rarely is the monotony of the other interrupted. The dulness of the inhabitants of these regions is not the abstractedness of thought, or the pensiveness of genius, but the vacuity of a mind utterly unoccupied, and the weariness of a

[1] Isaiah, xxvii, 11. [2] Isaiah, xxiv, 7, 11.

[3] Quocunque te verteris arator stivam tenens Alleluia decantat. Sudans messor Psalmis se avocat et curva attondens vitem falce vinitor aliquid Davidicum canit.—Paul. et Eust. Epist. ad Marcellam, apud Reland. Palæst. Illust., tom. i, pp. 387, 388.

heart which knows no spring of true enjoyment to which it may repair. The scenes of jocund and light-hearted mirth, so frequently met with in free countries, are never exhibited here, "All joy is darkened." The tyranny of the government, which seals up the page of knowledge, and defrauds the people of the fruits of their labour, consigns them to a double indolence—that of the body and of the mind. They pass whole days seated on the ground deeply pondering upon—nothing. To walk for exercise or pleasure, as we do, never enters into the mind of an Oriental, nor indeed is there any great inducement to go abroad in a country where there are no roads or walks—not even in the gardens; and nothing is so troublesome to them as the restless activity, for such they account it, of the European.

So unusual is any thing like hilarity in this land of sorrow, that, when it does occur, it appears so unseasonable and out of place as to affect the traveller much in the same way as we would be affected were we to meet a reveller in the chamber of death. Stephens, after witnessing the amusements of a company of young women, one moonlight night, at the miserable Arab village of Rieha, in the plain of the Jordan, says, "It was so rare, in that unhappy country, to see any thing like gaiety of heart, that if they had been dancing over the graves of their husbands, I should have been inclined to join them." [1] Similar were the feelings of Lindsay in witnessing a scene of the same kind in Lebanon, where the people were comparatively happy and contented till the iron of Egypt began to enter into the soul. His lordship's

[1] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 257.

tent was pitched in the beautiful vale of Eden, near a cascade in a grove of walnut-trees: "A crowd of villagers," says he, "congregated under the trees in front of our tent that night; children were romping about,—some one was modulating the shepherd's reed not unmelodiously,—it was a more cheerful scene than I ever witnessed in the lowlands of Syria or Palestine, where the merry-hearted do sigh." [1] The words of Volney are too memorable to be omitted: "To behold an Arab with his head inclined, his hand applied to his ear, his eye-brows knit, his eyes languishing; to hear his plaintive tones, his lengthened notes, his sighs and sobs, it is hardly possible to refrain from tears, which, as their expression is, are far from bitter." [2] It thus appears that the curse denounced against the land has fallen also on those by whom it is inhabited. The sorrow so visible on their countenances seems to say, that they carry a burden on the heart which no hand can lift off; and the poverty, the ignorance, and the wretchedness in which their lives are passed, and the oppression under which they groan, are at once the effects of the curse and the punishment of the crimes in which they indulge.[3]

[1] Lindsay, vol. ii, pp. 220, 221. [2] Volney, vol. ii, p. 292.

[3] To the idle habits and melancholy temperament of the people of the East are we to trace the practice of story-telling, so prevalent in these countries. This is a favourite amusement with all classes. The ease with which this luxury, for to them it is so, can be enjoyed, suits their indolence, while the excitement it produces, breaks the monotony of their life. The repetition of the practice, day after day, does not, in the smallest degree, abate their interest or exhaust their patience. There are professional story-tellers, who ply their avocation for a few paras. The tales are of the wildest character; but are greedily devoured by persons of all ages and ranks, by old white-bearded men, the mer-

From what we have said regarding the gloomy temperament of the people, the character of their entertainments may easily be inferred. In this too we behold the prophecy fulfilled: *I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation.*[1] "A feast," says Solomon, "is made for laughter." Not so an oriental feast in modern times. Great entertainments are rarely given in the low country of Palestine; they are more frequent among the wealthy Maronite shiekhs of Lebanon; but are entirely wanting in comfort and cheerfulness. Several days are spent sometimes in preparations. The feast-day comes, and the table groans under an ill-arranged luxury, the abundance of which cloys the appetite without enlivening the spirits. With the guests it is impossible for a European to hold any conversation, owing to their limited knowledge on all subjects; and although, at the tables of the Maronites, wine is allowed, yet, in the absence of all agreeable converse, and also of music, the time passes heavily enough. *They shall not drink wine with a song. The noise of them that rejoice endeth.*[2] [3]

chant, the pilgrim from Mecca, the dervish, the Persian, and the Bedouin. [1] Amos, viii, 10. [2] Isaiah, xxiv, 8, 9.

[3] The fare of the Bedouins is exceedingly simple, and sometimes such as a European palate can with difficulty reconcile itself to—rice boiled in sour milk, and mixed frequently with a considerable quantity of oil. On a stranger's arrival in a wealthy encampment, a kid usually is killed, and boiled in milk; reminding the traveller of Scripture times, and explaining to him a Scripture injunction, Exod. xxiii, 19, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk," a precept which has been variously understood, but which is most consonant with Arab usages, we conceive, when viewed in its literal meaning, as prohibiting a practice which was certainly a barbarity. It has been asked by Michaelis, how the Hebrews thought of so extraordinary a thing as to boil a kid in milk? But the thing certainly was not extraordinary. Buckingham (Arab Tribes, p. 7) tells us that, on

After a very affecting prediction of the calamities which were to befall the land, the oppression and spoliation under which it was to groan, the prophet concludes by saying that its tribute should not enrich its conqueror. *They shall be ashamed of your revenues.*[1] The taxes are levied by the terror of the bayonet, and the poverty which is unable to pay is often punished by the infliction of the bastinado; yet, after an iron despotism has done its utmost, it may well be ashamed to count the gains it has wrung from an impoverished people. Volney has given a table of the contributions received from the several pachalics, from which it appears that, in his time, the revenue of Syria was truly miserable, and that the country, in fact, was beggared. The sultan received not more from the whole of Syria than one hundred and twenty-two thousand pounds.[2] This is a sum of which its avaricious masters may well be ashamed, when it is compared with the magnificent stream of wealth which this once rich country poured into the coffers of Rome. It appears from Dr. Bowring's report that matters have improved a little since the time of Volney, yet the revenue is still far below what Syria might yield under an enlightened policy, considering its extent, and the favourable character of the soil and climate. The revenue for 1836 is stated at six hundred and ninety-six thousand pounds;

arriving at an Arab encampment on the east of the Jordan, "a meal was prepared for us, the principal dish of which was a young kid seethed in milk." The practice has descended, doubtless, from early times. We find Abraham entertaining the angels with milk and butter, and a young calf, tender and good; and it is not improbable that the calf was boiled in the milk which formed part of the repast. Gen. xviii.

[1] Jeremiah, xii, 13. [2] Volney, vol ii, p. 236.

but the estimate, the doctor informs us, is to be considered as only approximate.[1] The consul at Aleppo is of opinion that it has improved since; but still the country is inadequate to support itself. For, while its revenue amounts only to the sum we have mentioned, its expenditure is stated at nearly double that amount, and the possession of Syria is supposed to be very onerous to the pacha. Thus, though the life of the Syrian peasant is misery, "Yet," in the words of Volney, "does he not in any degree enrich his tyrants, whose covetous despotism punishes itself." [2]

The depopulation of the country forms one of the most obvious fulfilments of prophecy which has yet fallen under our notice. It was foretold that *men* should be *removed far away*, and that there would be *a great forsaking in the midst of the land.*[3] It was also said, *The inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.*[4] It were needless to adduce any proof of a fact so obvious as the depopulation of Palestine. A circuit of twelve miles diameter would have included anciently as many cities as are now to be found in the whole country. The towns inland are mere villages; and, with the exception of Jerusalem, which contains only a population of ten thousand,[5] and which is indebted for this miserable remnant of its ancient "multitude" to its being the metropolis of Mohammedanism in Syria; and the towns of

[1] Report. Com. Stat. of Syria, pp. 21—25.
[2] Volney, vol. ii, p. 274. [3] Isaiah, vi, 12. [4] Isaiah, xii, 6.
[5] The population of Jerusalem is often estimated much higher; but that given in the text is from the latest and best authority—Dr. Bowring (Report, p. 7). Travellers often visit it at Easter, and are misled on this point by the great number of pilgrims, by whom the population for the time is commonly doubled.

Jaffa and Acre,[1] which owe the little importance they possess to their position on the coast, the only part of

[1] Since these sheets were sent to the press, the fall of Acre before the British, which adds another to the long list of disasters which this city has already experienced, renders a short notice of it proper at this moment. We quote Sandys' description as being, in several respects, the best we have met with.

"Acre, seated on a levell, in forme of a triangular shield; on two sides washt with the sea; the third regarding the champion. The carkasse shows that the body hath bin strong: double immured, fortified with bulwarks and towers; to each wall a ditch, lined with stone, and under those diuers secret posternes. You would thinke by the ruins that the city rather consisted wholly of diuers conioyning castles, than any way mixed with private dwellings: which witnesse a notable defence, and an unequall assault; or that the rage of the conquerors extended beyond conquest; the huge wals and arches turned topsie turvy; and lying like rocks upon the foundation. On the south-side lies the haven, no better than a bay; open to the west, north west, and south-west winds: the bottome stony and ill for their cables. When possest by the Christians, it was an Episcopall sea, and under the metropolitan of Tyrus."—pp. 204, 205. Although this town was situated in the tribe of Asher, it remained in the hands of the Canaanites, for it does not appear that the Israelites were ever able to drive them out. Since the time of Sandys, Acre has been repaired and beautified; after the French retired from Syria, Djezzar Pacha applied all his efforts to the reconstruction of its fortifications. In many places he raised a high wall, strengthened by bastions, and defended by a broad ditch, outside of that with which the Saracens had already enclosed it. In digging for a foundation to these fortifications, buildings were discovered at the depth of twenty feet below the present soil, composed of highly burnt brick, which Buckingham supposes, with considerable probability, may have been the houses of the ancient Canaanites. In addition to what was done for Acre by Djezzar, Mehemet Ali had strongly fortified it, and provided it amply with all the means of defence. The interior contained a mixture of the gaudy and the miserable. The streets were narrow; the houses of stone, with flat roofs. The only ornaments of the town were an old khan, of the finest Arabian architecture; the palace of Soliman Pacha, with spacious courts and fountains; the mosque of Djezzar Pacha, which contains also his tomb—the court of the mosque is cooled by a fine fountain, and shaded by the dark green cypress. The population consisted of Mohammedans and Arabs in equal numbers, amounting to one half. One fourth were Roman Catholics; the remaining fourth were Jews, who had two synagogues. A Jew, Haim by name, was the prime minister of Djezzar.

the country which can be said to be inhabited at this day are the valleys and mountain passes of Lebanon. In the lowlands the traveller may journey for days together over plains covered of old with innumerable cities without meeting a single human being, save perhaps the Arab and his flock. Storks are striding to and fro over the fields, the fox is digging his hole amid the ruins of cities, and the vulture is filling the air with his screams. The earth, in the memorable language of Volney, seems a "dreary burying-place." There is *a great forsaking in the midst of the land. The inhabitants are burned, and few men left.*

This picture is sufficiently gloomy in itself, but is rendered more so by comparison with the ancient populous state of the country. In the days of Solomon, "Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry."[1] From the accounts which remain, it is commonly concluded that, in the time of Titus, Judea contained not fewer than four millions of inhabitants; and it is probable that this estimate is rather below than above its ancient population; and yet, at this day, it is *empty of men.* It is a land which eateth up its inhabitants.

Not only have the inhabitants of Palestine decreased, but the decrease has been according to the prophecy: *Thus saith the Lord God, The city that went out by a thousand shall leave an hundred, and that which went forth by an hundred shall leave ten.*[2] It is universally admitted that this is the proportion which her present inhabitants bear to her ancient. Volney and Malte Brun agree in estimating her pre-

[1] 1 Kings, iv, 20. [2] Amos, v, 3.

sent population at one-tenth of what the country anciently contained, and the accuracy of their calculations is confirmed by the statements of recent travellers. Of the once populous tract on the east of the sea of Tiberias, Elliot says, "Population seems to have decreased from thousands to hundreds, and from hundreds to decades."[1] "Syria," says Mr. Consul Moore, quoted by Bowring in his Report, "Syria is a country whose population bears no proportion to its superficies; the inhabitants may be considered, on the most moderate calculation, as reduced to a tithe of what the soil could abundantly maintain under a wiser system of administration. The actual number of inhabitants cannot be given with any degree of accuracy. A census is unknown here, and information derived from other sources fallacious. It is chiefly from personal observation, that any correct information can be collected."[2] Dr. Bowring estimates the present population of Syria at one million five hundred thousand, which is not much above one-third of what Palestine alone, which is but a small part of Syria, contained anciently. Thus has the prophecy been fulfilled, *Few men are left. The city that went out by a thousand shall leave an an hundred, and that which went forth by an hundred shall leave ten.*

The condition of the few remaining inhabitants is exactly such as the prophet foretold: *They that dwell therein are desolate.*[3] The life of the Syrian peasant is the more miserable that he cannot entertain the hope of ever raising himself from his present

[1] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 325. [2] Bowring's Rep., Appendix (A).
[3] Isaiah, xxiv, 6.

condition—he is doomed to look forward, and see his life ending amid the same poverty and wretchedness in which it began. His greater industry only invites the Bedouin, or draws upon himself the tyranny of the government; if he possesses a bare subsistence, it is all he expects, and all indeed which he is permitted to enjoy. His hut frequently serves as a dwelling for his cattle as well as for himself. A terrace, raised about two feet from the ground floor, runs round the walls, and serves for the use of the family, while the middle and lower portion is occupied by the cows and poultry. The dress of the country is extremely plain. That of the men consists simply of a white cotton frock, descending to their ankle, and fastened round the middle by a girdle. That of the women differs only from the other in its colour, being blue instead of white. They cover the head with a long white veil, which flows loosely down the back. Very few of the common people, whether men or women, wear shoes. Their diet is equally plain. "They are every where," says Volney, "reduced to a little flat cake of barley or doura, to onions,[1] lentils, and water. They know so little of dainties, that they esteem strong oil and rancid fat as delicacies. In the mountains of Lebanon and Nablous, in time of dearth, they gather the acorns from the oaks, which they eat, after boiling or roasting

[1] Onions are much used in the East as an article of food; but they are far superior in quality to those of our country. "The onions of Egypt," says Monro, "are like apples." This explains what is said of the Israelites, that they remembered in the wilderness the onions they did eat in Egypt. We may here remark, that if the fruits and vegetables of these countries be superior to those of ours, their animal food is much inferior. Like that of all hot climates, it is lean and bad.

them on the ashes."[1] The same traveller says, generally, with regard to the condition of the Syrian peasant, that it is "miserable." But the most affecting account of their condition has been given by Elliot. "The peasants are left with the minimum of food and clothes requisite for life; and the first cry of 'Give, give,' which is answered by total destitution, is urged and re-urged with the thong of the bastinado. Elsewhere, the curse is enforced, 'labour and the sweat of the brow;' in Syria, it is labour and starvation and a nudity and sweat of blood."[2] How truly may it be said of the wretched inhabitants of this unhappy land, *They that dwell therein are desolate.*

It was foretold that the Lord should lay "sicknesses" upon that land. The climate of the ancient Judea was exceedingly healthful. The climate of the mountains is so to this day, but the plains have become, to a considerable degree, insalubrious; this is the case as regards at least the plains on the coast and the valley of Jericho. The vast masses of masonry with which these plains abound, obstruct the subterranean passage of the springs, and produce swamps and marshes, which send off a pestilential exhalation. Elliot speaks of a "miasma which generates and perpetuates disease."[3] Fevers and other diseases are common, in consequence of this. The filth of the towns renders them seldom free of plague. "All the low district between the range of Lebanon and the Mediterranean," says Dr. Bowring, "is much exposed to pernicious miasmatic influences; and

[1] Volney, vol. ii, pp. 272, 273. [2] Elliot, vol. ii, pp. 313, 314.
[3] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 468.

fevers and agues are complaints to which the inhabitants are much subjected."[1] Thus it would appear that the present possessors of this country inherit the curses denounced against its ancient children in case of disobedience. *I will even appoint over you terror, consumption and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart.*[2] *The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption and with a fever and with an inflammation.....and with blasting and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.*[3] How clearly do the facts we have mentioned regarding the insalubrity of the country, and its consequent progressive depopulation, verify the prediction, that it should be said of this land, *Thou land devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations.*[4]

Volney relates that they are often afflicted with partial blindness, as the consequence of using grain not fully ripened, and mixed with other and deleterious kinds.[5] In this he has been corroborated by others. Of the inhabitants of Ramla, on the plain of Sharon, we find Wittman saying: "Both young and old were alike afflicted by blindness. This was not surprising, since it was easy to trace in their squalid and meagre countenances the manifest causes of disease, namely, the want of a good nourishing diet, and the necessary clothing to encourage and keep up the excretions of the skin."[6] *The Lord shall smite thee with blindness, and thou shalt grope at noon-day as the blind gropeth* IN DARKNESS.[7]

[1] Rep. Com. Stat. of Syria, p. 52.
[2] Leviticus, xxvi, 16.
[3] Deuteronomy, xxviii, 22.
[4] Ezekiel, xxxvi, 13.
[5] Volney, vol. ii, p. 273.
[6] Wittman's Travels. Scots Magazine, vol. lxv, p. 625.
[7] Deuteronomy, xxviii, 28, 29.

Besides the Bedouins, the inhabitants of Palestine, and of Syria in general, are exposed to other invaders, whose incursions are less frequent, but whose ravages, when they are inflicted, are more terrible. Moses foretold that the locust should devour the trees of the field and the fruits of the ground.[1] One would think that a country so impoverished as Palestine would have had little reason to dread the infliction of this dreadful scourge—that whatever the evils to which it might be liable, its poverty would at least have exempted it from this; yet we sometimes find the country suffering from this visitant, so contemptible when single, so overwhelming in bands.

The Hauran, according to Elliot, is subject to an almost annual visitation of this kind; but not the Hauran only—these terrible visitors often cross the Jordan, and carry desolation into Palestine. On the wing their immense numbers darken the sky, when they alight the surface of the earth is completely covered with them; in browsing on the trees and herbage, the noise they make is like that of an "army foraging in secret:" before them is the rich scenery of summer, but all is barrenness and death in their rear. A few years ago, Dr. Bowring tells us, Ibrahim Pacha employed his army in an attempt to extirpate them; but the soldiers who conquered the sultan appear to have been foiled before the locust.[2]

[1] Deuteronomy, xxviii, 38, 42.

[2] Burckhardt, p. 238; Volney, vol. i, p. 213; Elliot, vol. ii, p. 334; Bowring's Rep. of Syria, p. 10. The locusts are used by the Bedouins as an article of food. They are slightly roasted on an iron plate, rolled in salt, and preserved in bags. The peasants of Syria seldom eat them, unless when pressed by hunger. It is not settled amongst commentators whether it was the animal, or the fruit of the locust-tree on which the Baptist fed in the desert.

It was foretold that, so long as divine judgments should continue on the people, the land should lie uncultivated and enjoy her sabbaths, *Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths.*[1] The reference here is to the sabbatical year, during which it was unlawful for the Israelite to sow his field or prune his vineyard, or even to gather the spontaneous produce of the earth. Such has been the state of Palestine, speaking generally, for the past eighteen hundred years—her fields have enjoyed a long sabbath; the labourer is rarely seen on them, and the quiet that reigns over the country presents the stillness of the sabbath, without its sanctity. No sooner had lord Lindsay entered the country than we find him using these words: "No work was going on; it was the stillness and repose of a sabbath morning in England."[2]

In fine, it was foretold that every one who should visit that country should be astonished at its desolation: *The generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the* LORD *hath laid upon it; even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the* LORD *done thus unto*

[1] Leviticus, xxvi, 34.

[2] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 50. *As long as it lieth desolate, it shall rest: because it did not rest in your sabbaths when ye dwelt upon it.* With such a monument before us as Judea presents of the danger of sabbath violation, it is truly pitiable to hear this sin defended or advocated in a Christian country. Such policy is short-sighted, even in a temporal respect. Whatever is taken from that day, instead of being *a gain*, may be safely reckoned a *sevenfold loss*. Judea for ages has been paying at a much higher rate: she has given years for minutes.

this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger?[1] It may be safely affirmed that no one ever visited that land who did not feel, as the prophet here predicts, astonishment at its plagues. This feeling takes possession of the mind of the traveller the moment he enters the country, nor does it leave him till he has passed beyond its boundary; and even then it returns as oft as the wasted plains and desolate mountain piles of that land recur to his memory. So fertile a soil, so delicious a climate, and yet so utterly spoiled and utterly desolate! It may well astonish him to find a land, so rich anciently in every requisite of enjoyment, now so completely impoverished, and exhibiting in every point only a painful contrast to its former condition. The sanctuary of truth converted into the abode of superstition; the dwelling of freedom inhabited by a race of slaves; the ancient theatre of magnificent cities covered with mud huts; the land of vines overgrown with brambles; its bounteous soil trodden by a famished race; and its salubrious climate changed into one which devoureth men: "Wherefore," he exclaims, "hath the Lord done this unto this land; what meaneth the heat of this great anger?" All travellers have occupied themselves with attempts to discover the causes of this fearful change; several have been content to trace it only to the oppression of the Turks and the robberies of the Arabs, forgetting that these have simply been the instruments in a mightier hand for laying the country desolate, and that the employment of these agents for this purpose was expressly foretold. But others have been able to lift their eyes to the

[1] Deuteronomy, xix, 22, 24.

true cause. In the broken and prostrate condition of Judea they have seen, not the effects of man's oppression simply, but the infliction of a divine curse. To the inquiry, "Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land?" not a few have replied, "Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book."

The *truth* of the following lines are as remarkable as their *beauty*. Though drawn obviously from the prophecy, they contain a graphic and touching picture of Judea as she presently exists. We quote them as a concluding description of that land.

"On Carmel's brow the wreathy vine
Had all its honours shed,
And o'er the vales of Palestine
A sickly paleness spread,
When the old seer, by vision led
And energy sublime,
Into that shadowy region sped,
To muse on distant time.

"He saw the valleys far and wide,
But sight of joy was none.
He look'd o'er many a mountain side,
But silence reign'd alone;
Save that a boding voice sung on
By wave and waterfall,
As still, in harsh and heavy tone,
Deep unto deep did call.

"On Kison's strand and Ephratah
The hamlets thick did lie.

No wayfarer between he saw,
No Asherite pass'd by:
No maiden at her task did ply,
No sportive child was seen;
The lonely dog bark'd wearily,
Where dwellers once had been.

"Oh! beauteous were the palaces
On Jordan wont to be,
And still they glimmer'd to the breeze,
Like stars beneath the sea!
But vultures held their jubilee
Where harp and cymbal rung;
And there, as if in mockery,
The baleful satyr sung." [1]

So numerous were the particulars embraced in the prophecy, and so exact has the fulfilment been in every instance, the traveller can scarcely write a sentence regarding that country but he inadvertently quotes the language of the prophets. The man who can believe that all this has happened of chance has assuredly no reason to complain of the easy faith of other men. How much more rational is the view which the Christian takes of this important matter. In his eye, Judea and the countries adjacent are beheld as the stage chosen of Providence on which to display the truth of the divine word, and the great principles on which the world is governed; and where the important lesson has been taught to all the nations of the earth, and to all the ages of time, that there is an inseparable connection between the righteousness and the prosperity of a nation—between their disobedience and ruin.

[1] Hogg—Scottish Christian Herald, vol. ii, p. 720.

CHAPTER X.

FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY AS REGARDS THE CITIES OF JUDEA.

Number and splendour of the ancient cities of Palestine—Testimony of Scripture on this head—Of Josephus—Present ruinous condition—Moral degradation—Ruined towns on the plain of Philistia—On the road through the mountains to Jerusalem—Ruins in the wilderness of Ziph adjoining the Dead sea—Tekoa—Carmel—Maon, &c.—Ruined sites on the plain of Sharon—Arimathea—Joppa—Cæsarea—Dor—Zippor—Ruins on the plain of Esdraelon—In the valley of the Jordan, east and west of the river—Ruins north of Jerusalem—Bethel—Samaria—Jezreel—Meroz—Ruined sites around the lake of Gennesareth—Capernaum, &c.—Jericho—Gerasa—Ruins of Judea haunted by serpents—A pasture of flocks—Possessed by the heathen—Causes which operated in effecting the overthrow of the cities of Palestine—War—Earthquake—Indolence of inhabitants—Description of cities which still exist in Judea—Hebron—Bethlehem—Nazareth—Jerusalem—Aspect of Jerusalem when approached from the north—Plan of the ancient city—Interior of the modern Jerusalem—Inhabitants—Condition of the resident Jews—Conclusion.

We are now to speak of the cities of Judea. Our subject does not require that we should offer any statistical account of these cities, or even a lengthened or circumstantial description of their physical state and aspect. All we propose is a brief account of their general condition, such as may suffice to show how completely the prophecies which foretold their ruin have been fulfilled. These prophecies are numerous, we shall quote only a few of them.

"I will make your cities waste," said God by Moses, "and bring your sanctuaries into desolation;

and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate and your cities waste."[1] When Isaiah received the commission to make the ears of his people heavy, and to shut their eyes, we find him enquiring how long the calamity he was empowered to inflict should continue,—"Until the cities be wasted without an inhabitant," was the divine reply, "and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land."[2] "I will make Jerusalem heaps," said Jeremiah, "and a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate without an inhabitant."[3] "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks that they might not hear my words."[4] In fine, we find Micah predicting—"I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strongholds. And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee, so will I destroy thy cities."[5]

Thus it was foretold that, the destruction of the cities should form a prominent feature in the desolation of the land of Israel. If these cities still exist, or if they can boast of the same wealth, splendour, and population which they possessed, when the prophets foretold their fall, then let it be confessed that the prediction has failed. But, if at this day "the cities of Judah are desolate"—if they are "waste

[1] Leviticus, xxvi, 31, 33. [2] Isaiah, vi, 10—12.
[3] Jeremiah, ix, 11. [4] Jeremiah, xix, 15. [5] Micah, v, 11, 14.

without an inhabitant," then let it be acknowledged that the prophets spake by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

We have estimated the ancient population of Palestine at four millions—an estimate which all will allow is exceedingly moderate. Yet this is a prodigious population, considering the very limited extent of the country; though the extreme fertility of Judea renders it by no means incredible. Now the number of the cities must have been in proportion to the amount of the population. Both sacred and profane history assure us that the cities and towns of Palestine were very numerous; and if the testimony of history needed any corroboration, we would find it in the ruins with which the country is covered everywhere, and of which in a little we shall have occasion to speak. In Judea cities appear to have arisen on every spot convenient for their erection. They were thickly planted over the whole country. If the traveller descended along the coast, he passed one rich city after another—from Sidon, behind which Lebanon waved his forests and poured his streams, to Gaza, which was enclosed with a boundary of gentler but not less beautiful hills, covered with the palm. As he passed along, he saw Tyre, reposing on the bosom of the seas,—Accho, sitting under the shadow of Carmel—Cesarea, erecting its marble palaces, and looking proudly over the ocean—Joppa, spreading itself out upon its small and circular mount —and Askelon, reposing securely within the strong fortifications which nature had united with art in throwing around it. If he turned his steps inland, wherever he journeyed on the broad plains of Sharon and Philistia, amid fields of golden grain, forests of

fig-trees, and rows of sycamores, cities met his gaze, whose splendour was little inferior to that of their more celebrated rivals on the coast. Here rose the towers of Ramah and Lydda. Yonder gleamed the palaces of Zorah and Eleutheropolis. If he ascended the hills of Judah, where the vine contended with the olive which should most abundantly reward the labour of the husbandman, amid the terraces and fountains of the hills, he found cities and towns innumerable—sometimes seated in the vale, but more frequently climbing the mountain, and ascending even to its very summit.[1] If he went south to the region adjoining the Dead sea, a part of the country less thickly peopled than the rest of Judea, even there he found cities of considerable importance and extent. On the eastern border of the fine pastoral plain, which almost adjoins the western shore of the Dead sea, he found the towns of Ziph, Carmel, and Maon; and he had only to penetrate through the low range of hills which runs on the east of these sites, in the direction of the lake, when lo! on the very face of the cliff, and hung almost over the wave, was En-geddi, smiling amid its gardens and opobalsamums, in the very presence of the sea of death. If he descended into the valley of the Jordan, he found that art had adorned with her triumphs a region which nature had so peculiarly distinguished by her bounty; that while the one had planted there

[1] We seek shelter from the weather, and build generally on the plain. It is otherwise in the east: there the breezes of the mountains are courted by the inhabitant, and an elevated site is frequently chosen for his dwelling. The Hebrews had other reasons for preferring the mountains—they offered security from foreign invasion, and were well adapted for the cultivation of the olive and the vine.

the beautiful and graceful palm, and taught the mountains around to minister to the fatness of the olive, and poured the Jordan along the valley, at once to refresh and beautify the plain, the other had raised up the fallen Jericho, and placed Ai and Gilgal around it, spread forth the proud Phasælus and Archelais, sprinkled the bank of the river on both sides with villages and towns, whose ruins in many instances have survived their names, and crowned the heights which bordered the plain on the east with numerous and flourishing cities. If he sought the shores of Tiberias, the calm bosom of the lake was mirrored with the princely cities which occupied its margin; while the swelling hills which rose around it were graced with the noblest structures. If he went westward, he found villages and towns girdling the foot of Tabor and Hermon, and covering the banks of the Kishon; while the broad bosom of Esdraelon was thickly sprinkled with hamlets, villages, and cities, which enlivened the prospect in every direction. If he ascended the hills of Nazareth, and penetrated into Galilee, every vale disclosed to his view cities of greater or less importance, from the little Cana up to Zippor, the capital of the province. In fine, wherever he turned in this land, he beheld the same proofs of a bounteous soil and an overflowing population.

If we look to the fifteenth chapter of Joshua, we shall find, that when the land was divided amongst the tribes, the possessions of Judah alone contained one hundred and fifteen cities, with their villages. The rest of the land would maintain at least an equal proportion of cities; for that part of the country which fell to the lot of Judah was not by any means

the most fertile; nor were these towns inconsiderable. Moses speaks of them as "great and goodly cities; and if they were so at the period the tribes entered the land, what must they have been in the latter ages of the nation? Josephus, speaking of Galilee, says,—"It is all cultivated by its inhabitants, and no part of it lies idle. Moreover, the cities lie here very thick; and the very many villages there are here, are everywhere so full of people, by the richness of their soil, that the very least of them contain above fifteen thousand inhabitants."[1]

In an age when Judea was so populous in cities; when they covered her plains, her mountains, and the shores of her lakes, how improbable must the prediction have appeared, that the cities should be desolate without an inhabitant and the houses without man; yet now how fearfully is that prediction verified. At this day the ancient cities of that land are nowhere to be seen. They have sunk beneath the curse of the prophet, and disappeared as completely as if the earth had opened her mouth to receive them. In a few instances their site is occupied by mud villages, which retain the name but inherit nothing of the splendour of the ancient cities of Israel. A dome or minaret may give to them, in some instances, an imposing appearance at a distance; but the illusion is effectually dispelled the moment they are entered. We find nothing within but narrow and crooked streets, covered with filth, and hovels containing only a poor, ignorant, and savage-looking population. Should the traveller direct his steps to some of the more celebrated of the ancient towns—

[1] Wars of the Jews, book iii, chap. 3, sec. 2.

to Hebron, where David reigned—to Bethlehem, where the star of Jacob arose—or to Nazareth, where the Saviour dwelt, in the hope that there he will find some trace of former glory remaining—something which will atone for the rugged paths by which they are approached, and the dreariness and solitude of the desert around, he finds an inconsiderable town, tenanted by a few Arab families, with a mixture sometimes of Catholics and Jews, but all sunk to the lowest point of wretchedness and poverty. Should he turn to the capital of Judea, in the hope that there at least he will find something not unworthy of her past renown and of her present rank, as the metropolis of the Lower Syria, he meets there the same scenes of poverty and wretchedness on a larger scale which he has witnessed elsewhere on a smaller. He finds the Queen of Judea sitting amid barren mountains, with the words no longer applicable to her—"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion." She now wears a deserted, forlorn, and joyless appearance. The traveller hears, as he draws nigh, no sound of voices from within, and beholds no throngs of people at her gate. In the words of Stephens, "all is still as death;" and the perfect stillness of the scene where the traveller looks for the noise and bustle of life, falls heavily on his heart; and at the moment he would feel even the solitude of the desert a relief. "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! How is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!"[1]

[1] Lamentations, i and ii.

It is only after being repeatedly baulked in this manner—after searching all over the country for the ancient fertility of her soil and the ancient splendour of her cities, and finding them not, that the traveller feels in how exact and awful a manner the denunciations of the prophets have been inflicted upon Judea. Their voice has been silent for many ages, and their dust sleeps peacefully in her bosom; yet the curse they pronounced lies to this hour upon the mountains and valleys and cities of Israel; and in vain would the fertility of the one and the beauty of the other struggle into existence in opposition to it.

The moral degradation of the cities of Israel is as complete as their physical. At Bethlehem the crescent shines over that vale where the shepherds sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill towards man." At Nazareth, so long the residence of the Son of God, and worthy on that account of being regarded as the classic ground of Christianity, the daily cry of the watchman from the tower is—"There is one God, and Mahomet is the prophet of God." At Jerusalem, on the very mount where the temple stood, and the schechinah so long dwelt, the mosque of Omar now stands, as if in haughty triumph over the fallen people and the desolate land of Israel. "The high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste."[1]

But this general statement is not enough. The more fully the subject is enquired into, the more plainly does the truth of the prophets appear. Except in a few instances, where a modern village has

[1] Amos, vii, 9.

arisen upon an ancient site, the cities of Israel at this day, in every part of the country, "are desolate without an inhabitant." The plains which formed the ancient Philistia, in the south-west of Judea, on the border of the sea, are covered with the ruins of ancient towns. The names which occur so frequently in the wars which the Hebrews waged with the Philistines are still preserved in an Arabic form, and are now applied to mouldering heaps of stones, placed generally on the summit of the small eminences or hills which diversify the plain. The towns which formed the scene of Samson's exploits, Zorah, Timnath, Socho, and others, still remain, but only as ruins. Pre-eminent among these ruins is the ancient Betogabris, situated on the plain, about eighteen miles north-west of Hebron. This site was adorned by the Romans with great magnificence, and dignified with the Greek name of Eleutheropolis, which the Arabs, after their usual custom, have discarded for the ancient title, and at this day call Beit-jibrin. The remains of a strong fortress of Roman construction, around which are the traces of an extensive town, are still visible on this site. Every heap where the thistle nods, or the beast of prey digs his cave, was once a princely city—the abode in early times of the lords of the Philistines, and the residence in after ages of the Jews and Romans.

From the ruins of Eleutheropolis, the ancient road to Jerusalem runs in a north-east direction through the mountains. "The whole region," says professor Robinson, who was the first to explore this part of the country, "is full of ruined sites and

ruined villages, some deserted and some partially inhabited."[1] On the west of the route across the valley of Turpentine, which here runs along by the side of the road, is the lofty site of the ruined village of Soba, which travellers, misled by the monks, commonly mistake for the ancient Modin, the burial-place of the Maccabees. At a considerable distance in the south-east, adjoining the Dead sea, is the fine pastoral tract, denominated by the ancient Hebrews the wilderness of Ziph—abounding at this day in ruined cities.

After passing Bethlehem in a south-east direction, we come to the Frank mountain—a high conical hill, which rises above the neighbouring heights, and forms the most conspicuous object in this part of the country. On its top are the ruins of ancient fortifications; and at its base, on the north side, the traces of an extensive town, which professor Robinson thinks may have been Herodion, which was built by Herod, and formed the place of his burial. From the Frank mountain we proceed in a south-west direction, till we reach the elevated site of Tekoa, where the ruins of a city of considerable extent are still visible. From Tekoa the direction changes to south; and after a long journey we reach Beni-Naim, situated five miles nearly due east of Hebron. Passing on to the south, a journey of five miles brings us to the ruins of Ziph; and three miles beyond are the ruins of Khurmel—the ancient Carmel. Here Nabal dwelt, while his flocks roamed over the fine pastoral plain around. The ruins are of great extent; and the remains of several churches

[1] Amer. Bib. Rep., Series ii, vol. ii, p. 421.

attest the flourishing condition of Carmel at a period considerably subsequent to the Christian era. Two miles south of Carmel are the ruins of the ancient Maon,—while due east of it, situated on the cliff which overhangs the western shore of the Dead sea, are the remains of Ain-jiddi—the ancient Engeddi;[1] Such is the condition of the country south of Jerusalem, with respect to its ancient towns. Plain and mountain are alike covered with ruins. On these sites, for the most part, there is no dweller, unless the Bedouin, who sometimes pitches his tent above the fallen city, while his flocks roam over the adjacent fields. These mouldering heaps, scattered at short intervals over the face of the country, present to the traveller a very affecting commentary on the words of the prophet—*I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant.*[2]

In other parts of the country the ruined sites are

[1] Amer. Bib. Rep., Series ii, vol. ii, pp. 417, 418.—It is clear that no one is qualified for testing the accuracy of the position presently assigned in maps to the ancient towns of Palestine, much less of making discoveries on this subject, save those who are well skilled in the Hebrew and Arabic tongues. Travellers in general have been very deficient in this respect; and in consequence they have been almost entirely dependent on the monks, and often contradict one another. Professor Robinson possessed the requisite qualification, in at least as high a degree as any who ever visited the country; and as the consequence of this, his brief report contains more accurate original information regarding the ancient sites, than all the volumes of recent travellers put together. No one since the days of Burckhardt, and the class to which Burckhardt belongs, has contributed so much to our knowledge of the ancient cities of the east. Instead of consulting the monks, Robinson searched over the country for the ancient names, which in most cases have survived where the ruins remain. All the maps of Palestine are inaccurate on the head referred to; but the professor has furnished data for re-modelling them; and we trust that his travels will supply, when they shall be given to the public, still more abundant materials for this purpose.

[2] Jeremiah, ix, 11.

equally numerous. If we traverse the mountains on the west of Jerusalem, the ruins of towns and the remains of plantations of fig-trees, are perpetually reminding us of the former cultivation of the country and the present decay of its industry.[1] If we descend on the plain of Sharon, these memorials of desolation become even more frequent. We soon arrive at Ramla, the ancient Arimathea, the birthplace of the kind friend who took down the body of the Saviour, and laid it in "his own new tomb." This town is placed on a gentle eminence in the middle of the plain. The narrow streets, broken pavement, and mean and filthy dwellings which compose the modern Ramlà, do not solicit the stay of the traveller; and the only signs he is able to discover of the importance of the ancient Arimathea are the extensive fields of ruins around the town. In the midst of the broken mass rises a lofty tower, which once belonged to a monastery, commanding from its top an extensive view over the plain of Sharon and the sea-coast.[2] From Ramla, the approach to Jaffa is performed over a soil of extreme fertility, covered with ruined and abandoned villages.[3]

The aspect of Jaffa we have already described. Its mean buildings are crowded on the slope of a small hill overlooking the sea. It presents to the eye a collection of flattened domes, having no towering minaret to relieve its dull and gloomy aspect. Besides being the scene of several classic fables,[4]

[1] Mariti, vol. ii, pp. 295—300.
[2] Wilson, pp. 103—106; Robinson, vol. i, p. 28.
[3] Robinson, vol. i, p. 25.
[4] Here, according to Pliny, Andromeda was chained to a rock and exposed to a sea-monster, for the pride of her mother Cassiope.

Joppa, according to tradition, existed before the deluge, and was the place where the ark was built. We have better authority for believing that it was the port where the disobedient prophet embarked, and where the fleets of Hiram discharged their cargoes of cedars for the erection of the temple. The greatest attraction which it contains at this day, in the eyes of the monks, is the ruins of the house of Simon the tanner, where Peter lodged. It would grieve the fathers much to think that any visitor should depart without having inspected these ruins. The English traveller, however, generally expresses himself better satisfied with the extensive and fruitful gardens on the south and east of the town.[1]

Leaving Jaffa, we ascend the coast, passing on our way numerous sites, once the scene of population and traffic, but now utterly abandoned. After a journey of thirty miles, we arrive on the spot where Cesarea once stood. This was originally a place of small importance; but the munificence of Herod, who named it Cesarea in honour of the reigning emperor, rendered it the rival of Jerusalem. The streets were widened, mouldering tenements were replaced by palaces of white stone; and to attract the commerce of distant nations, a commodious harbour was constructed, which was defended from the west and south-west winds by a semicircular mole, so capacious that a whole fleet might have anchored within it. This city was the scene of constant contentions between the Jews and Syrians;[2] and being

[1] Buckingham, vol. i, pp. 227—240; Elliot, vol. ii, p. 509; Sandys, p. 152.

[2] The fatal war, which ended in the overthrow of the Jewish

the seat of the Roman tribunals, some of the early Christians here suffered for the truth. Since that day Cesarea has seen many changes. Its capture by Omar, in the seventh century, completed the conquest of the Holy Land. It was retaken from the Saracens by Baldwin, king of Jerusalem, in the beginning of the twelfth century. In the end of the same century it fell under the dominion of the celebrated Saladin. From the Mamelukes it again passed into the hands of the Christians, but was soon retaken by the infidels. Amidst these repeated disasters, Cesarea saw her splendour and the magnificence of her monuments gradually annihilated. She has long been an utter desolation. We look around on the spot once covered with palaces, temples, and theatres: here factions contended, and here too the martyr died; but now the vain strife of the one and the noble sufferings of the other are ended. A few fragments of granite columns, two broken aqueducts, numerous mounds of ruins, covered with long grass and haunted by beasts of prey, whose cries at night render the solitude more dreadful, are the only vestiges which remain of the once proud city. "At the present moment," says Buckingham, "the whole of the surrounding country is also a sandy desert towards the land: the waves wash the ruins of the moles, the towers, and the port toward the sea; and not a creature resides within many miles of this silent desolation." [1]

nation, is to be traced to a contest between the Syrian and Jewish inhabitants of Cesarea, in which twenty thousand of the latter lost their lives.

[1] Joseph. Antiq., book xv, chap. 9; Mariti, vol. ii, pp. 236—245; Buckingham, vol. ii, pp. 198—215; Robinson, vol. ii, pp. 189, 190.

About half-way between Cesarea and Carmel, situated on the coast, are the ruins of Tantur—the Dor of Scripture. Ancient writers speak of the magnificence of its temples and the splendour of its buildings; but like most of the celebrated cities of the Levant, its site can hardly be distinguished.[1] Still higher on the coast is the site of another ancient town, the Attik of the Arabs, so completely destroyed that even savage animals do not lodge in it.[2] Doubling the promontory of Carmel, we arrive at Caipha, situated at the base of the mountain. This town, which is built of the ruins of the ancient city, is merely a collection of huts, which have been set down without the least attempt at order.[3] In the vale of Zebulon is the ancient Zippor, once the capital of Galilee and the rival of Tyre,—it is now a heap of ruins.[4] In the neighbourhood are several small villages surrounded by ruins, which show that they were once cities of importance. Mariti informs us that Galilee would be equally attractive to the antiquary and the poet, "because the former would have abundance of ruins to study, and the latter would find flowers to cull at every season of the year."[5]

It would not be easy to find so many proofs of the complete fulfilment of the prophecy on the cities of Israel in the same number of pages, as is to be found in that chapter of Buckingham's 'Travels among the Arab Tribes' which contains an account of his journey from Nazareth to Zsalt. The route

[1] Mariti, vol. ii, pp. 233, 234. [2] Ibid, vol. ii, p. 231.
[3] Ibid., vol. ii, p. 127; Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 78.
[4] Mariti, vol. ii, p. 158; Robinson, vol. i, p. 242; Pococke, vol. ii, p. 62. [5] Mariti, vol. ii, pp, 194, 195.

of the traveller included a great part of the possessions of Israel both west and east of the Jordan. The ruins with which the whole country abounded, bore ample evidence to the vast number and great magnificence of the ancient cities of the Jews; and the prophecy was completely verified in their utter desolation. Almost at every hour's distance he passed the remains of some ancient city. Among these he particularly specifies Daborah, Nain, and Endor, on the plain of Esdraelon.[1] Beth-shan, on the eastern extremity of that plain, which still contains a considerable population, and exhibits several vestiges of its former magnificence, such as a theatre and many marble columns erect and fallen. After he had crossed the Jordan, he found the ruined sites equally numerous. "Indeed," says he, "from the number of old fortresses that were seated among the hills on each side of the Jordan, nothing is more probable than that each of these marked the position of some ancient place."[2] On some of these sites he saw the outlines of streets, the remains of aqueducts, broken arches, pillars, baths, temples, and theatres, all destroyed. In most cases there was not a single dwelling entire nor a single inhabitant on the spot; the cities had been wasted without an inhabitant, and the houses without man; and the Lord had removed men far away; and there was a great forsaking in the midst of the land.[3]

At the town of Zsalt Buckingham met with a person who had travelled a good deal in the neighbourhood, and who communicated to him what he

[1] Buckingham, Arab Tribes, p. 5. [2] Ibid., p. 10.
[3] Ibid., pp. 4—20.

knew regarding the ruined cities with which it abounds. The traveller was writing down their names as they were spoken by his informer, when all at once the Arab stopped short and exclaimed—"By the beard of the prophet, there are three hundred and sixty-six ruined towns and villages about Assalt, and I know the names of all; but who could have patience to sit down and recite them to another, while he writes them in a book? I said all I could to explain the utility of this," continues Buckingham; "and added, that my chief object in taking this trouble, was for the purpose of ascertaining what scriptural names were still retained and extant among the ruined cities here; but all my efforts were of no avail; the patience of my companion was exhausted, and there was no prevailing on him to resume his task. I had ascertained, however, by this means, at least one highly interesting fact, viz. that the whole of this region was in a manner studded with the ruins of ancient towns, and must have been once highly fertile and thickly peopled..... A visit to the places themselves, and the comparison of names on the spot, might lead to the most interesting discoveries towards the elucidation of scriptural topography, and restore the lost knowledge of this interesting region, which appears both from ancient testimony and the existence of innumerable ruins up to the present time, to have been one of the most fertile and thickly peopled countries on the face of the earth, though it still remains a blank in our maps, and is considered by all who treat of these countries as a desert or a wilderness." [1]

[1] Buckingham, Arab Tribes, p. 46.

The ancient highway, which leads from Jerusalem to Galilee, reveals to the traveller, amid the mountains of Ephraim, and the vales of Samaria, numerous ruined sites, not wholly forsaken, but occupied in many instances by poor Arab villages. Bethel, situated nearly on this road, about ten miles north of the capital, is worthy of our notice from ancient recollections. Enlarged and beautified by Jeroboam, and dishonoured by the worship of the golden calf, it now lies in ruin,[1] a monument of the divine abhorrence of idolatry, and the truth of prophecy. "It is now," says professor Robinson, "entirely uninhabited."[2] "We carried away from the ruins a stone," says Elliot, "the only thing to be found there."[3] *Bethel shall come to nought.*[4]

Considerably to the north of Bethel, in the very heart of the country of Samaria, are the ruins of the capital of the kingdom of Israel, situated in the manner we have already described, "on a high semi-spherical mount, standing alone in a valley encompassed by hills." This city was the subject of a distinct prophecy, and its fate has been in exact accordance therewith. The ancient beauty of its architecture, and the productiveness of the vine-clad valleys and hills around, are implied in the figure under which the prophet speaks of it, "The crown

[1] Maundrell states that the precise site of Bethel is unknown. Even so late as the time of lord Lindsay, it had not been discovered. Its site was ascertained by professor Robinson. The prophecy, "Seek not Bethel," we do not view as affirming that it should remain undiscovered, although it has commonly been so understood, but as a command to the Israelites not to repair thither for idolatrous purposes.

[2] Amer. Bib. Rep., Series ii, vol. i, p. 416.

[3] Elliot, vol. ii, p. 411.

[4] Amos, v, 5.

of pride." "The glorious beauty which is on the head of the fat valley."[1] Its streets, graced by colonnades, appear to have encircled the hill, and rising in successive rows to its summit, the city bore a striking resemblance, to a "flower" on the head of "its fat valley." But it was foretold that Samaria should be a "*fading* flower." The hill is now covered in many places with the remains of temples, and the fragments of columns, which look like a flower plucked up by its roots, and cast on the ground. Several colonnades are still standing on the mount; one in particular—a double colonnade—runs along the southern base of the hill for more than half a mile, and appears to have extended anciently all round. Of the numerous edifices of the city, two only remain—a church, situated on the brow of the hill, and erected over a subterranean chamber, which, according to an Arab tradition, was the prison of John the Baptist, and the scene of his martyrdom. The antiquity of the vault is attested by the fragments of a stone door, similar to that seen in the sepulchres of the kings at Jerusalem, with which the entrance to the vault appears to have been anciently closed.[2] The summit of the hill is crowned by another building, commonly termed the palace of Herod. Of this edifice between thirty and forty columns still remain; the prospect from this commanding spot is almost unrivalled in that land in point of beauty and

[1] Isaiah, xxviii, 1, 4.

[2] This church does not appear to have been erected by Helena, as travellers commonly suppose. Professor Robinson says that the crosses of the Knights Templars so abundant in its architecture show it to have been erected by them. The tradition we have alluded to led them, no doubt, to its erection on this spot.

softness. The hill itself is now formed into terraces, and mostly planted with vines. *I will make Samaria as plantings of a vineyard.* To prepare the ground for this sort of cultivation, the foundations of the city appear to have been razed, and the stones rolled down into the valley. *And I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof.*[1] At night the ruins resound with the screams of vultures and the howlings of jackalls. These doleful creatures appear to verify the words of the prophet, *I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls.*[2] Such is the condition of Samaria. Her inhabitants and posterity are taken away, and her king is cut off as the foam on the water.[3]

Pursuing our way through the hills of Samaria by our former route, we soon emerge on the plain of Esdraelon. Crossing the plain by a track somewhat east of the usual one, we pass through Zer'in, which, we have professor Robinson's authority for regarding as the ancient Jezreel. Robinson has determined its site; Elliot has described its appearance: "At noon," says the latter, "we reached Zuraeen, the ancient Jezreel, a miserable little village, surrounded by some magnificent sarcophagi, which lie exposed in the valley.....Here, likewise, was the vineyard of Naboth, 'hard by the palace of Ahab, king of Samaria;' and here, too, was fulfilled the terrible denunciation against his idolatrous wife, 'the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.' Now, the

[1] Micah, i, 6. [2] Micah, i, 8.
[3] Stephens, vol. ii, pp. 311—313; Elliot, vol. ii, p. 382; Amer. Bib. Rep., Series ii, vol. i, p. 428.

vineyard and the palace, cultivation and architecture, are alike unknown. All is dilapidation and barrenness. When we visited Jezreel it was under water; a few half-naked Arabs were the sole representatives of the courtiers who surrounded the palace of the king, and the pastures of his camels and horses were occupied by storks and lizards." [1]

A few hours to the north-west of Zer'in are the ruins of Meroz,[2] with the curse of the angel still resting on them: "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof: because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty." [3] "It is at present," says Buckingham, "destitute of any other inhabitants than the herds of cattle which are driven within the enclosure for shelter during the night." In the immediate neighbourhood of the ruins are two excellent wells of water, still frequented; and sarcophagi, whose sculpture represents pillars, festoons, and wheels. [4]

From this spot we shall go eastward to the sea of Gennesareth, and examine the present condition of the celebrated cities in which so large a part of the ministry of Christ was discharged, and where the mighty miracles were performed, by which the mission of the Son of God was established. The blue lake, amid its swelling hills, presents to the eye of the

[1] Amer. Bib. Rep. Series ii, vol. i, p. 428; Elliot, vol. ii, p. 379.

[2] The Arabic name of this site is Mezra. We have supposed that it is the ancient Meroz, which, from its mention in the Song of Deborah, in connection with the discomfiture of Sisera, on the banks of the Kishon, must have been placed in this neighbourhood. Reland says, Videtur non longe abfuisse a torrente Kisehon, et locus erat habitatus.—Tom. ii, p. 896.

[3] Judges, v, 23. [4] Buckingham, vol. ii, p. 379.

visitor the same scene of calm beauty as when the Saviour proclaimed along its shores the glad tidings of salvation; but, in other respects, the aspect of this illustrious region is greatly changed. The magnificent cities with which it was adorned have all vanished; and the remains of the fallen Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, are now to be sought for amid the mouldering heaps with which the plains on the western and northern shores of the lake are so abundantly studded. No trace whatever of these illustrious names remains among the native population, and it is now impossible to say which of these mounds was Chorazin and which was Bethsaida. In applying these names travellers have been guided mainly by fancy. Stephens affixes the name of Bethsaida, "the city of Andrew and Peter," to "a small mound of crumbling bricks and stones, almost overgrown with grass," situated on the plain near the northern extremity of the sea. "A short distance off," says he, among the hills that border the plain, alike in ruins, is her sister city, Chorazin." Less uncertainty exists regarding the ruins of Capernaum, the town in which Jesus so frequently resided that it came to be called "his own city." Its site is commonly identified with that of an extensive field of ruins, styled by the Arabs, Telhoom, and situated on the northern plain, near where the Jordan enters the lake. Its ruins, which are overgrown with grass and bushes, extend for more than a mile along the shore, and command a beautiful view of the whole lake. "Nothing remains," says Elliot, "but piles of stones, over which later residents have raised their habitations; and these, too, have crumbled into

decay. The only living creature we beheld was a solitary jackall." "I had now passed along the whole western shore of the lake," says Stephens, "and if this be not Capernaum, my horse's hoofs must have trampled upon the city of our Saviour's love without my knowing where that city stood." [1]

These cities were placed in a region exceeded by few spots on the earth in point of natural beauty. They were favoured, above all the cities of Israel, with the residence and the ministry of the Son of God. They were "exalted unto heaven." Every day they saw the mighty works of the Saviour, and heard him preach the gospel. But now the voice of mercy has long been silent in them; their splendour is utterly eclipsed, and the darkness of eighteen centuries covers their remains. The cities that despised the love of the Son of God now lie in the grave, pressed down by the weight of his curse: "Wo unto thee, Chorazin, wo unto thee, Bethsaida: and thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell." [1]

With regard to Jericho, which was alike conspicuous at the commencement and the close of the Jewish history, this celebrated town has shared the common fate of the cities of Israel; it is now an utter desolation. Previous to the time of Buckingham, travellers commonly awarded to Rieha, the honour of occupying the site of the ancient Jericho, and many concede this distinction to it still. Buckingham has shown, satisfactorily, we think, that such are misled, and that the extensive field of ruins

[1] Amer. Bib. Rep. Series ii, vol. i, p. 429; Stephens, vol. ii, pp. 329, 330, 333; Elliot, vol. ii, p. 319. [2] Mat., xi, 21, 23.

which is seen about six miles from the Jordan, at the foot of the western hills, has a better claim to be regarded as the remains of Jericho. Richa is a poor village, containing from twenty to thirty Arab families, and has no remains of antiquity in its neighbourhood, nor gives any evidence of ever having been a place of any importance.[1] On the other hand, the ruins discovered by Buckingham accurately agree, in regard to distance, from Jerusalem, and local position with the statements of Josephus.[2] These ruins occupy a space of about a mile square. They consist of long and regular mounds, overgrown with grass, indicating the foundations of walls and other buildings. Broken shafts of columns lie scattered about. There is not a single dwelling or inhabitant on the spot. The place is a dreary solitude, overhung by a lofty and barren mountain, and rarely visited, unless by the Arab, who wanders over it unconscious of the splendonr on which he is treading.[3] How clearly here has the prophecy been fulfilled, as it has also been on most of the once fortified cities of this land. *The defenced city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness.*[4]

There are numerous ruins on the east of the Jordan —the remains of the cities which were once pos-

[1] We think it is highly probable that Richa occupies the site, or nearly so, of the ancient Gilgal. The tribes crossed the Jordan 'over against' Jericho, and encamped in the plains of Gilgal; and Reland, on the authority of Eusebius, states that Gilgal was situated two miles east of Jericho, between that city and the river. Such also is the position assigned to it by Josephus. Now this agrees with the situation of Richa.—Reland. tom. ii, p. 782; Joseph. Antiq. v. 1.

[2] Josephus' 'Wars of the Jews,' book iv, chap. viii, sec. 3.

[3] Buckingham, vol. ii, pp. 61, 62. [4] Isaiah, xxvii, 10.

sessed by the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. The whole of the Hauran is covered with ruins; and the same is true of the hills of Gilead south to the frontier of Ammon. Many of these sites are distinguished by great magnificence; but our limits allow us to advert only to one of them, Jerash, situated in the region to which we have just referred—the mountains of Gilead. Jerash—the ancient Gerasa—must have been the seat of great splendour, for its ruins are of the most magnificent character. They occur in a country of great fertility, though quite neglected. Approaching the ruins from the south, we first pass through a beautiful triumphal arch; just within this gateway, on the left, is a fine naumachia for the exhibition of sea-fights.

Passing on we come to the gates of the city, entering which we observe, on the left, the remains of a temple, and, a little to the east of it, a large theatre excavated in the side of the hill. Going forward a few paces, we find ourselves in a beautiful circular colonnade, of the Ionic order. From this crescent a noble avenue of columns runs off in a straight line to the north, marking the direction of the principal street, which appears to have extended through the whole length of the city. The buildings are gone; the columns which adorned their front only remain. This street is crossed by another at right angles, and appears, like the former, to have been lined by a row of columns. We cannot enumerate the individual edifices which remain. The city, which occupied a space of nearly two English miles square, stood on two opposing slopes, with a narrow valley between,

through which a stream flows. The eastern slope appears to have been devoted to the residence of the common people, and is now covered with the ruins of their dwellings; the western acclivity displays the remains of temples, theatres, arched buildings with domes, detached groups of Ionic and Corinthian columns, baths, aqueducts, and bridges. The place is a perfect galaxy of art. This is one of the most extraordinary sights the traveller can enjoy; the skeleton of a city standing alone in an unpeopled wilderness. The columns that remain are so numerous that they appear like groves of palm-trees. Silence is nowhere more awful; but this is the word of the Lord: "In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction."[1]

It is not in the fall of these cities alone that we may trace the fulfilment of the prophecy; the aspect of their ruins, and the uses to which they are devoted, likewise illustrate the truth and precision of the prophets. Of the cities of Judah it was foretold that their desolate remains should be haunted by serpents and beasts of prey; that flocks should feed on the spot where they once stood; and that the worst of the heathen should rebuild and inhabit their ruined houses. These prophecies appear at first sight to contradict one another. According to one prophecy the ruins of Judea were to become the abode of serpents; according to another, the pasture-ground of flocks; while a third foretold that they should be a dwelling for the heathen. At this day we behold all these predictions verified. In most

[1] Isaiah, xxiv, 13; Buckingham, vol. ii, pp. 137—239; Robinson, vol. ii, pp. 198—205.

cases the ruins are only partially buried in the earth; broken columns, and the foundations of walls and houses, peer up through the soil, as if unwilling to sink into the oblivion to which time is slowly consigning them. The cavities with which such ruined sites abound, are the lurking place of the lizard and the lair of the wolf and jackall, while the vulture may be seen watching his prey, perched on the top of some column which time has spared. The ruins along the coast, especially, swarm with these animals; and the cries and howlings with which the shore resounds at night are truly dismal. Of Cesarea, Robinson says, "the present tenants of the ruins are snakes, scorpions, and lizards, in great quantities, and, we were told, wild boars."[1] Of the inhabitants on the plain of Acre, Sandys says, that they "nightly house their goates and sheepe for fear of the jaccals (in my opinion no other then foxes) whereof an infinite number do lurke in the obscure vaults and reedy marishes adjoining to the brooke."[2] *The palaces shall be forsaken, the multitude of the city shall be left, the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever.*[3] *Behold, the noise of the bruit is come, and a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah desolate, and a den of dragons.*[4]

In other cases the ruins have been so completely buried in the earth, in the course of ages, that they are entirely covered with sward, and no one could suspect that a city had ever existed on the spot, were it not for the long and regular swellings of the

[1] Robinson, vol i, pp. 190, 191.
[2] Sandys, p. 205; Clarke, vol. iv, p. 446.
[3] Isaiah, xxxii, 14. [4] Jeremiah, x, 22.

ground. Flocks and herds may often be seen feeding quietly on such sites. Thus have the cities, as the prophet foretold, become *a pasture of flocks. There shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down.*[1]

Throughout the country the remains of the churches have survived generally those of the private dwellings. Their greater strength may have contributed to this result. Mariti informs us that at present they are employed by the Arabs as folds for their flocks and stables for their cattle. The Mohammedans, moreover, after they became masters of the country appear, in many instances, to have desecrated these places on purpose.[2] Thus has the prophecy been fulfilled, *Their holy places shall be defiled.*[3]

For the most part there is no inhabitant on these desolate sites; but in a few instances miserable huts have arisen on them, which form a striking contrast to the broken columns and other remains of architectural grandeur which exist beside them. These erections are inhabited generally by a few Arabs and Turks, plainly fulfilling the prophecy, *I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses.*[4]

Such is the present aspect of the cities of Israel. *The cities of Judah* have been made *desolate, without an inhabitant.* In all their *dwelling-places the cities* have been *laid waste*, and *the high places* made *desolate.* In proportion to their former splendour, their present ruin is the more awful and affecting. The

[1] Isaiah, xxvii, 10.
[2] Mariti, vol. ii, p. 299, and vol. iii, p. 130.
[3] Ezekiel, vii, 24. [4] Ezekiel, vii, 24.

same land which was adorned of old with their beauty, is now disfigured with their relics; but to these unsightly heaps a sacred character belongs. Like the twelve stones which Israel erected on the banks of the Jordan to commemorate their passage, every column, erect or fallen; every crumbling mound on the wastes of Judea, is a witness to the world of the truth of Jehovah. As the pillars beside the Jordan proclaimed to the after generations of the Jewish people the fulfilment of the covenant made with their ancestors, so these ruined heaps, which now cover the plains and mountains of their desolate country, proclaim both to them, and to all the nations of the earth, how awfully the God of their fathers is punishing them for the breach of his covenant; and how fully he is vindicating the truth of his prophets in inflicting the threatenings by which, it was foretold, they would be overtaken provided they should transgress. On the cities of Judah the prophecy is fully and awfully verified; and we may now make the same appeal to the inhabitants of the earth, regarding the Divine faithfulness, which the prophet made to the Jews in Egypt, after the first overthrow of their cities: "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah; and behold, this day they are a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein."[1]

Numerous agents have been employed in inflicting on the cities of this land the threatenings which the prophets denounced; but their ruin is mainly to be attributed to the four following causes,—war,

[1] Jeremiah, xliv, 2.

intestine broils, the violence of the elements, and the indolence of the inhabitants. Of these agents of destruction, the first has proved the most powerful. Since the day that the dove, with the olive of peace, was rejected in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, war has seldom been absent from this land. It was only forty years after the cross was erected on Calvary, till the abomination that made desolate was seen standing in the holy place, and, under Titus, the proudest of their cities was laid prostrate in the dust. Scarcely had they begun to recover when the legions a second time swept over Judea, and left behind them a country covered with ruins, and inhabited only by the beast of prey. The cities of Palestine were next raised up by Christian hands; but it was easier to rebuild their ruins than to remove the curse which still rested on them. Under that curse they sank a third time in the seventh century. The ministers of destruction, on this occasion, came from the eastern deserts; and the crescent shone above the tide of war which now rolled over Judea. From that period the powers of destruction began rapidly to operate on the cities of Palestine. Fresh calamities were inflicted on them in endless succession by numerous agents—the Fatimites from the sands of Cyrene, the Crusaders from the shores of Europe, the Mamlouks of Egypt, and, finally, the Turks, the present possessors of this beautiful though wasted land. There is not at present, nor indeed has there been for centuries, about the cities of Judea, almost any thing for war to destroy. With the exception of a single town on the coast (Acre), the modern villages of that land could not arrest the progress or inflame the ambition of a conqueror.

The second cause has acted more sparingly; but, in a few instances, intestine strife has been not less fatal to the architecture of Palestine than foreign war. The ruin of Zephoury, a city of great magnificence and the capital of Galilee, is to be ascribed, it is said, to this cause—the contentions of its own children. It was destroyed in 1339.

After the ravages of war, those of the earthquake are to be ranked as next in importance. Judea is not so subject to these dreadful visitations as the adjoining parts of Asia Minor; but neither is it wholly exempt. The same convulsions which have shattered the strong walls of Antioch, which have buried in the earth so many of the once opulent cities of that region of the world, have extended also to Judea, and on these occasions the labour of ages has perished in a few moments. On the first of January 1837, Tiberias, Saphet, and other cities, were almost totally destroyed by earthquake; nor have they, to this day, wholly recovered the injuries they then sustained. In a prosperous country these disasters are soon repaired, the ruins cumber the streets only for a few days, and the city rises from its fall, it may be, with fresh splendour; but if, in a declining state, every injury be permanent, much more must this be the case in a land which has reached the last stage of decay and ruin.

This leads us, therefore, to speak of the last cause which we have mentioned as having contributed to produce the utter ruin of the cities of Israel, namely, the indolence of the inhabitants. Unlike the preceding ones, this cause has operated, not in the way of actually producing calamities, but of rendering

permanent those which other agents had inflicted. The sloth of the superstitious and spiritless beings, who inhabit at present this land of warriors and prophets, conspicuous in all things, is eminently so in this. In Palestine, and in Syria, in general, no more effort is made to repair the ravages occasioned by the violence of the elements or the convulsions of nature, than if it were impious to raise up what the earthquake had thrown down. The accounts which Dr. Bowring has communicated on this head are of so extraordinary a kind, though confirmed by all who have visited these regions, that, with an entirely different class of habits, we find it difficult even to credit them: "A ruined building," says he, "like a felled oak, remains in the dust for ever. Even in the populous parts of some of the great cities of Syria, the heaps of ruins which have been left in the pathways by successive earthquakes, have not been removed. A few hours' labour would clear the wrecks away, but the passengers prefer to clamber up and down the piles of stones and fragments rather than to displace them." [1]

The fulfilment of the prophecy is not the less remarkable, that we are able to trace the means which heaven has been pleased to employ in executing its

[1] Report Com. Stat. of Syria, p. 28. The following fact is, perhaps, the greatest monument in the Turkish empire of this element of the Mussulman character:—The breach in the walls of Constantinople, by which the Turks entered when they took the city, has not, even to this day, been built up. Dr. Bowring mentions a fact nearly as singular, illustrative of their indisposition to alter what has been: "We found," says he, "the apartments of the castle of Aleppo in precisely the state in which they were abandoned to the conquerors—the halls strewed with armour, covered with broken bows, quivers and arrows in tens of thousands, and numberless despatches, with the Sultan's signet, still scattered about the floor."

purpose on the cities of Israel. Whether these cities fell in a night, or mouldered away in the course of centuries; whether an angel was commissioned to inflict their doom, or a foreign army levelled them with the dust; whether the conflagration reduced them to ashes, or the earthquake shook them into ruin, is obviously a matter of no importance so far as the prophecy is concerned, provided the condition of these cities be such at this hour as the divine word foretold. The sword, the pestilence, the earthquake, are eminently the ministers of Jehovah's vengeance; and by these agents has he, in this instance, executed his righteous purpose and fulfilled his word. But how improbable the change when it was foretold. The tide of war, it might have been said, may roll over the country, but peace will repair the ravages it has inflicted. Pestilence and famine may cover its fields with barrenness, but the next propitious season will clothe them with plenty. Surely the sun cannot forget to warm, the rains to descend, the springs to flow, and the olive and the vine to flourish. The earthquake may dismantle the palace, but art will restore it. The past history of the world had furnished no similar example, and at that time it could not have been deemed possible that this beauteous land, so thickly peopled, so highly cultivated, and which was literally covered with the miracles of art, should, for twenty long centuries, be abandoned to savage hordes, and become a stage on which war, plague, and earthquake should exert their combined and ceaseless energy. Yet such has been the fact; and when the curtain is lifted up at the close of this long period, we find that we

are gazing on a magnificent wreck. Plain, mountain, and river lie before us, alike smitten by the lightning of the curse. The towns, villages, and cities have been swept away, long dark mounds mark the spot where they stood, and the beast of prey is digging his cave amid the ruins of their buried splendour.

It may not be improper, in the conclusion of this chapter, to advert very briefly to one or two of the more celebrated of the existing towns of Palestine. As the modern representatives of the illustrious cities, whose site they occupy and whose name they bear, they cannot be viewed by us otherwise than with great interest, however mean their architecture or small their importance in other respects.

The first town of note we come to, after crossing the southern border of Palestine, is HEBRON, situated in the hill country of Judah, about twenty-seven miles south of Jerusalem. Arriving from the south, a long broad and winding valley, richly clothed with the finest vines, leads the traveller to this venerable town. Here David resided for seven years after he ascended the throne; but the appearance of Hebron at this day gives no indication of its ever having been the residence of a monarch. It is a small collection of white houses, closely jammed together on the lower slope of a hill, and containing a population of about two thousand. The background is formed by a lofty limestone mountain, which is thinly sprinkled with a few olive trees. The lanes of the city are narrow, dark, and filthy; and amongst the population the eye often recognises the peculiar costume and the still more peculiar features of the Is-

raelite. Being one of their holy cities, Hebron contains about five hundred of this fallen people, whom Moslem oppression and Popish idolatry still unite to retain in darkness. The vale before it has higher attractions than those which arise from its great fertility. Here, in other days, the tent of Abraham was pitched, and here the voice of the patriarch was heard, interceding with the Judge of all the earth on behalf of Sodom. That tent has now disappeared; but the vale still contains the dust of him who dwelt in it; and when the sun sinks in the west, and the dark shadow of the mosque, which rises over his presumed grave, is projected along the valley, the cry of the Muezzin, calling the faithful to prayer, is heard over his ashes. The inhabitants of Hebron still retain the lawless character for which they were famed in the days of David—a circumstance which is easily explained, from the fact that Hebron is a border city.[1]

A journey of twenty miles brings us in sight of a small irregular village, illustrious only from former recollections—BETHLEHEM of Judah. The star which announced the birth of the Saviour, though it shone not over the temples and palaces of Jerusalem, beamed upon the humble roofs and pastoral valleys of Bethlehem. The great mystery first revealed amid the bowers of Eden, and which was so long announced in prophecy and prefigured in type, was at last fulfilled in the city before us—"God manifest in the flesh." Somewhere in the neighbourhood lay the field of Boaz—the scene of one of the most beautiful stories in the sacred volume. On the

[1] Irby and Mangles, pp. 342—245; Stephens, vol. ii, pp. 140—145; Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 51; Elliot, vol. ii, pp. 495, 496.

neighbouring hills once roamed the flocks of Jesse; and here the youthful daring of the shepherd boy, who rescued the lamb from the paw of the lion and the teeth of the bear, bespoke the heroic valour of the future monarch. In the town itself there is little worthy of notice. From a city it has dwindled into a small village, which is seated on the brow of a steep hill, and contains about fifteen hundred inhabitants.[1] Anciently it was called Bethlehem Ephratah, the house of bread; and the character of its soil is still such as to justify its ancient title. The dews are here abundant; and this, uniting with a fertile soil, makes the scenery beautiful and the produce great. The hill on which the town is placed is arranged into terraces, which are well clothed with figs, pomegranates, and abundance of olives: the inhabitants subsist chiefly on their fruits. The valleys near the town are covered with verdure, and enamelled with flowers: corn is sometimes grown on them; and the bread made from it is said to be of excellent quality. The only building which strikes the eye in Bethlehem is the convent, which stands at the east end of the town. It is a large church, in the form of a cross, surrounded by high walls, which give to it the air of a fortress. It was erected by Helena over what she believed to be the site of the stable in which the Saviour was born. The visitor who comes to Bethlehem, expecting to find the stable and the manger the same as on that night when Mary "brought forth her first-born son," will find himself greatly disappointed. Archi-

[1] Dr. Bowring, in his 'Report,' estimates the population of Bethlehem at 1500. Elliot estimates them at only 500.

tecture, marble, silver, the wealth of princes, have been profusely lavished to decorate a spot which HE who was master of the world chose before every other, because he was naked and destitute. On entering the church, the traveller finds himself in a magnificent chapel, adorned on either side with double rows of columns of white marble, intersected with veins of red. The floor is also of marble. The walls, which were once lined with the same material, have been stript of their covering by the rulers of Egypt. A flight of steps leads the visitor down into a chapel hewn out of the rock, and similar in its rich garniture to that above: this is affirmed to be the original stable in which Christ was born; "the credit whereof," says Sandys, "I will neither impeach nor enforce." This chamber is thirty-seven feet long and eleven wide; its floor and walls are covered with white marble. Fourteen silver lamps, the gift of as many Christian kings, are kept burning day and night in it. At the farther end of the chapel, in the floor, appears a star, formed of precious stones of various colours, marking the exact spot of the nativity. Such is the present appearance of a place which, if it be indeed the scene of the mighty event which has given it interest, had been better left in its original state. The simplicity of the evangelist's narrative, which introduces to our first notice the King of Glory in a manger, but ill prepares the visitor for being ushered into a hall decorated with marble, and reflecting the radiance of silver lamps. He feels that art and wealth have aided superstition, to deface rather than to adorn this interesting spot.

A few years ago Ibrahim Pacha expelled all the Arabs and Mohammedans generally from Bethlehem—assigning as the reason of his doing so, that their quarrelsome disposition rendered peace impossible, so long as they and the Catholics should live in the same town. No Mussulman resides at present in Bethlehem; and the scene of Christ's birth has thus been left entirely in the hands of his professed followers.[1]

We next turn to NAZARETH, which is found by the traveller deeply seated in its little vale, amid the mountains which bound on the north the plain of Esdraelon.[2] This small town rises like an amphitheatre up the slope of the hill. The majority of the houses are of stone—a rare circumstance in this land at present. The population, which is chiefly Christian, amounts to about two thousand.[3] The mosque, with the crescent glittering above it, which rises in the middle of the town, proclaims that the false prophet is worshipped in the city where Jesus lived. The soil around Nazareth is barren; but the monks have taken care to make up for this, by planting it thickly with holy places. And the circumstance that the youth of the Saviour was passed in this vale has afforded them a rare excuse for the exercise of their invention, and an excellent ground on which to claim credit for all their legends. The

[1] Sandys, pp. 177—181; Mariti, vol. ii, pp. 407—428; Witman's Travels, Scots Mag., vol. lxv, p. 705; Stephens, vol. ii, pp. 169—185; Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 54; Elliot, vol. ii, pp. 501, 502.

[2] See p. 195.

[3] Bowring's Report, p. 7.—A town of 2000 people in the east does not cover nearly the same space of ground which one of that class would do in our country. It is not uncommon in Syria to find eight or ten individuals living in the same room.

visitor is conducted to the workshop of Joseph, and to the spot, now covered with a magnificent church, where the angel announced the conception to Mary. It is true, her house which once occupied the site is no longer to be seen here; but if the visitor should regret its loss, he will be consoled to learn from the monks, that for the greater security of so invaluable a piece of architecture it was safely transported into Italy by angels, when Palestine was filled with infidels.[1] From these idle tales, the visitor turns with a peculiar relish to the scenery around the town. Here there can be no mistake. This is indeed the vale in which He who made the earth and heavens deigned to dwell, when he was pleased to assume a body of flesh; and here it was that as man he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." These are the hills on which he daily looked; and this the vale in which he daily walked; and here the fond heart of a mother was daily gladdened by the sight of his opening virtues. What a contrast is there between the still beauty, the deep seclusion and quiet of the vale of Nazareth, in which the early years of the Saviour's life were passed, and where his ministry opened, and the stormy scenes of Calvary, amid which both were closed.

From the prediction of the prophet—"He shall

[1] No doubt we would have enlivened our descriptions very much, by giving minute accounts of such places; and such is the *staple* of which, with a few exceptions, descriptions of Palestine are composed. But this does not enter into our plan; and so far as the profit of our readers is concerned, we could have accomplished that object quite as effectually, by leaving the space which the letter-press of such descriptions would have occupied a blank in our pages.

be called a Nazarene"—taken in connection with the question of Nathaniel—"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"—it would appear that Nazareth was a town of evil repute. The cause of this has been sought in the fact, that it was a frontier city. It adjoined the Phenician territory on the west and the country of Samaria on the south; and it is easy to conceive that Nazareth might be a frequent resort of the adherents of idolatry, and the refugees of war, as well as of those whose crimes prompted them to flee from justice. Accessions of this sort would deteriorate the morals of its people; and hence the evil character which they seem to have borne. The fact that Christ resided in this town during the greater part of his life on earth gives a peculiar meaning to the prophet's words—"a root out of a dry ground," and affords a striking proof of the holiness of our Lord himself. That one without sin should be found any where on a fallen world is well fitted to excite surprise; but it is still more surprising to find this holy fruit growing in the polluted soil of Nazareth. In residing here, how emphatically true was it, that our Lord "made himself of no reputation."[1]

Before leaving Judea, we shall visit one other city—that city is JERUSALEM.

As we advance along the 'Path of Victory' in modern Rome, ancient associations crowd upon the mind. Every mouldering ruin on which the eye reposes is connected with scenes of grandeur and em-

[1] Sandys, pp. 205, 206; Pococke, vol. ii, pp. 63, 64; Jowett, pp. 155—170; Stephens, vol. ii, pp. 320, 321; Elliot, vol. ii, pp. 365—376.

pire. On the right are the ruins of the Colosseum, and on the left those of the palace of the Cesars; while before us rises the arch of Hadrian; and a little beyond, the memorable spot which often resounded to the eloquence of Cicero. The majestic river, on whose ample bosom navies might ride, does not appear half so magnificent an object as that small stream—the Tiber, which we behold winding its way amid the relics of empire—nor can the tall mountain, which lifts its head to heaven, covered with perpetual snow, fill the mind with such thrilling emotions as are awakened within us at the sight of that low eminence, which we discover crowned with ruins—the Capitol. It seems but yesterday since the conqueror trod the path on which we are moving; and we almost persuade ourselves that the thunder of the applause which greeted his return has but just now died away, and is yet ready to burst forth from amid the mouldering arches and broken columns which lie strewn around. We pause to listen whether the Sabine hills behind shall not return the city's roar; but we pause in vain. Temple and arch are silently mouldering away into oblivion; and we feel that Rome herself, in the days of her greatness, was not half so omnipotent as the unseen Power whose slow but irresistible progress is consigning to the grave the most illustrious monuments of her former grandeur, and at last shall sweep them all from the face of the earth; and when a renovated age rises on the world, the spot where the imperial city stood shall be regarded only as the abhorred stage on which iniquity was acted on a

greater scale than has ever been witnessed elsewhere in the history of mankind.

But time shall never annihilate—it shall not even lessen the glories of the spot to which we are advancing. The fierce tempest of war, and the ruinous shock of the earthquake, have levelled with the dust the towers of Jerusalem; and not a relic remains of her former glory. The soil has been swept. Her magazines of war and her temples of devotion, the palace of her kings and the dwellings of her people, have passed away; and the mean town which occupies their place cowers amid rocky heights, as if it felt itself unworthy to occupy so illustrious a site. The hand of tyranny, too, has been laid heavily upon her enclosing hills, and they are naked and bare, as before the almighty Word called forth the trees and flowers to clothe the mountain and deck the vale. But who can forget that the spot to which he is approaching has been dignified by events, compared with which the mightiest transaction which ever illustrated the banks of the Tiber or the plains of Greece, or ever furnished a theme for Roman song or Athenian eloquence, sinks into utter insignificance. Here Jehovah kindled, in the morning of the world, and here he kept burning through successive ages of ignorance and darkness, a divine light, which in due time, when the purpose of Heaven no longer required that it should be confined to one spot of earth, broke mildly forth over these mountains, to revive and bless with its heavenly radiance a benighted and despairing world. The little plain before us, ruined as it appears, and environed by naked peaks, is nevertheless the theatre of inspired

song—at one time vocal with the soft strains of Jesse's son, and anon resounding the thunders of Isaiah's eloquence—the stage which martyrs and patriots have trod, where priests have worn the robe of Aaron, and monarchs the crown of David, where the eyes of holy prophets have been unsealed, and the great events of futurity have been made to pass before them, and where the doom of Babylon and of Rome and of other mighty kingdoms, which now lie crushed and broken, was pronounced. In fine, in this plain we behold the altar on which was offered the GREAT SACRIFICE for an elect world—the battle-field on which the leader of the powers of darkness, the arch-apostate, was struck down, his legions routed, and his kingdom taken from him, and a victory achieved, by which the liberties, not of an age nor of a nation merely, but of a world were vindicated.

Our space does not allow us to give any minute account of this celebrated city; all we shall attempt is a brief description of its general aspect. The person who has been accustomed to conceive of Jerusalem as she appeared in the days of David and Solomon—a magnificent capital, seated amidst fruitful hills, which at once defended and adorned her, shall, on arriving at the spot, find himself greatly disappointed. The Jerusalem of other days has passed away, and the city which now occupies the site was built by Hadrian about an hundred years after the destruction of the ancient Jerusalem. It stands nearly on the same spot, but is far inferior to its renowned predecessor, both in extent and in the splendour of its buildings. It has never ceased,

speaking generally, to be the seat of war since the time of the Romans; so that little of the city, even as Hadrian left it, now remains. The same hills which stood around the ancient encompass the modern Jerusalem; but then they were terraced after the manner of the east, and clothed to their summit with gardens and olive-trees; and it is not easy for the visitor now to imagine the unrivalled scene which must then have been presented, by a city which was fortunate alike in magnificent buildings and a well-chosen position—a splendid capital, defended by strong bulwarks and towers, crowded with palaces of white marble, and crowned with a temple which was not rivalled by the finest creations of Italy or Greece; while the beauty of the architecture was relieved and softened by the rich green of the valleys and hills around. But at this day, the bare and blighted scenery by which it is environed communicates to the city an air of gloom and desertion. The deep silence which reigns over the whole scene inspires the traveller with awe as he draws near. Not a tree enlivens the prospect—not a breath of air stirs amid the mountains. The blood-red flag of the prophet, perchance, is hanging idly on the walls. The crescent is glittering above the low domes of the city; but other signs of life there are none. He is apt to imagine that what he beholds is not a city of the living, but a vast burial-place crowded with the monuments of the dead.

Suppose we approach Jerusalem on the north; then between us and the city walls is a level plain on which we may distinctly trace the foundations of numerous buildings, the city having extended an-

ciently much farther than it now does in this direction. On the east rises a lofty hill, whose faded verdure is scarcely enlivened by a few olives and parched vines—the mount of Olives. Between this hill and the city we perceive a deep valley, through which the stream of the Kedron flows—the valley of Jehoshaphat. On the south of the city is a flat-topped hill, covered in part with corn, and its summit occupied with a Turkish building. This is Mount Zion. On the west is a stony plain, extending from the city walls to the foot of the western eminences, beyond which the eye loses itself amid a wilderness of mountains.

In the buildings of the city there is little to strike the eye of the traveller. In the mass of flat-roofed houses spread out before him, and which occupy a space of about two and a half miles in compass, he discerns two objects more prominent than the rest. The first is a large building like a church, in the western quarter of the city. It stands on the supposed eminence of Calvary, and is said to cover the grave "where the Lord lay." The second object to which the attention is drawn, is a large elegant building with a lofty dome—the mosque of Omar. It stands close to the eastern wall, and occupies the very site on which the temple stood. This is the crowning point of Judea's desolation. Her temple was her glory: "Thither the tribes went up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel;" but now it is fallen; and this idolatrous shrine has usurped its place, and stands proudly there as if in haughty triumph over her fallen people and over her God.

Before entering Jerusalem, let us pause to describe

the arrangements of the city as she existed in the time of the Saviour. When closely examined, the ground on which it stood resolves itself into four eminences or hills; Mounts Zion and Moriah, two contiguous heights,—Acra, stretching along on the north of these eminences, and Bezetha, which lay on the north of Acra; keeping this arrangement of the ground in view, let us point out the several quarters of the city. On the south-west was Mount Zion—the head of the Jewish kingdom. On this hill stood the upper city, called sometimes the city of David. In the midst of the buildings which covered it was the strong palace of David, the seat of succeeding monarchs. On the east of Zion, not exactly in a line, but inclining to the north, was Moriah. It had once been the site of the thrashing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, but, being purchased by David when the plague was stayed, Solomon covered it with a glorious temple. Mount Zion was divided from Moriah by the valley of Millo. In this valley was the palace of Solomon, which communicated with the temple by means of a gallery or bridge, thrown across to the Mount of Moriah; here too was the throne of Solomon, the palace of the queen, and the house of the grove of Lebanon. The remaining portion of the valley was covered doubtless with gardens, and watered by the fountain of Siloa.

Descending from Mount Zion, and crossing the valley of the Tyropœum, which ran below it on its northern side, we entered the lower city. This part of Jerusalem, which was sometimes called the daughter of Zion, stood on Mount Acra, which extended across the whole town from east to west. On one

of its rocky summits, adjoining the temple on the north, stood the tower of Antonia. As this fort commanded the temple, the Roman garrison was usually stationed in it. From the tower of Antonia, a gallery was thrown across the street on the north, communicating with the palace of the Roman governor, near to which were the common hall and the courts of justice—the scene where our Lord was arraigned and condemned. On that part of Acra, which lay west of the temple, was the castle of the Maccabees, which, from its elevated site, commanded a view of the whole city. It was used latterly as a palace by Agrippa. Near to it, on the west, was the theatre of Herod, stored with magnificent paintings, representing the victories and triumphs of Augustus. Beyond this was the amphitheatre, sufficiently spacious to contain eighty thousand people; here the citizens of Jerusalem were entertained with the same barbarous sports with which the inhabitants of Roman cities were so familiar. In the same region of the city, adjoining the western wall, stood one of Herod's palaces, distinguished by the rare and curious stones of which the building was composed, the exquisite workmanship of its numerous and sumptuous chambers, and the gorgeous magnificence of their vessels and furniture; around it were groves of trees, and gardens watered by artificial fountains and enlivened by numerous statues. In the wall which enclosed this quarter of the city on the north, ranged at nearly equal distances from one another, were the three celebrated towers, Hippicus, Mariamne, and Phasælis; these Herod constructed of vast blocks of white marble, "for largeness, beauty, and strength,"

says Josephus, "beyond all that were in the habitable earth." Beyond this wall, on the north, lay Bezetha, or the new city. In the time of our Lord this was merely a suburb of Jerusalem, but Agrippa afterwards enclosed it with a wall; and as the nature of the ground without rendered this part of Jerusalem the most liable to attack, the walls were made enormously strong. Its towers, which, were ninety in number, are said to have rivalled the temple itself in the beauty of their stones and the finish of their architecture. The flower of these princely towers was Psephinius, which stood in the north-west angle of the wall; from its lofty summit the spectator might descry Arabia toward sunrise, and the utmost limit of the Hebrew territory on the coast.[1]

On entering the modern Jerusalem we look in vain for the magnificence of past ages. The city is now shrunk to nearly a third of its ancient dimensions; the bare site of Bezetha, and great part of Mount Zion, are at this day without the walls; and the valleys are so filled up with the rubbish of former buildings, that it is difficult to discover the place formerly occupied even by its more distinguished monuments. Immediately on entering the Bethlehem gate, on the right is the castle of the Pisans, which is supposed to stand on the site of the tower of Hippicus; a little farther on, on the left, is the poor monastery of the Franciscans. At some distance beyond is the small eminence, which has been gratuitously supposed to be the ancient Calvary,[2] and

[1] Josephus' 'Wars of the Jews,' book v, chap. 4; Sandys, pp. 155—157; Pococke, vol. ii, pp. 7—21; Amer. Bib. Rep. Series ii, vol. i, p. 411.

[2] We are quite satisfied that the *presumed* site of Calvary and

the site of the crucifixion. This height is covered with a church, beneath the noble roof and magnificent galleries of which is shown a sepulchre in the rock, lined with beautiful marble, and illuminated by the radiance of silver lamps; this, the visitor is told, is the tomb of Joseph, in which the body of the Saviour was laid. The whole of the adjoining portion of Acra, is now covered with the convents and dwellings of the Catholics. On the eastern portion of this hill, on the site, or nearly so, of the residence of the ancient Roman governors, is the house of the present governor of Jerusalem; it stands a little north of the mosque of Omar, which is built on the ancient Moriah. From the residence of the governor a street runs westward to the presumed Calvary; this, in all likelihood, is part of the path which the Saviour trod when on his way from the hall of Pilate to the cross, though the places which the monks point out as those where Christ was exhibited to the people, where he fainted under his cross, and where similar occurrences took place, are not worthy of any attention.

The streets of the modern Jerusalem are narrow, the bazaars or shops are low and dark; that portion

the sepulchre is not the *real* one. A single glance at a plan of the city will convince any one, we should think, that the ground occupied by the Church of the Sepulchre, which is nearly in the middle of the modern city, could not have been without the walls of the ancient one. It is plain that this church is built on Acra; and, if the supposition of professor Robinson be correct, that the bottom of the tower of Pisans is part of the tower of Hippicus, as its appearance strongly indicates, then, as this tower is considerably to the west of the presumed Calvary, it is, beyond a doubt, that this is not the mount on which the Prince of Life was crucified: the monks have been keeping watch for ages around a false grave, and the wealth of princes and the devotion of pilgrims have been misapplied.

of the houses which fronts the street is mean, and the windows, being generally grated, the city has something of the appearance of a prison. Notwithstanding of this, in point of cleanliness and general comfort, Jerusalem is superior to the majority of oriental cities. The chief employment of the inhabitants consists in the manufacture of crucifixes, rosaries, and amulets, fashioned out of olive stones from Gethsemane or bitumen from the Dead sea, which are sold to pilgrims, or shipped for Italy and Spain.[1]

The resident population of the city, which amounts to ten thousand, consists of three classes—Mohammedans, Catholics, and Jews. The Moslems occupy the eastern portion of the hill of Acra, the region adjoining the mosque of Omar. The Catholics live on the western portion of the same hill—the parts around the Church of the Sepulchre. The dwellings of the Jews lie to the south, and cover the valleys of the Tyropœum and Millo, and that portion of Zion which is included by the walls. We do not underrate their numbers when we estimate them at four thousand.

Of all her inhabitants, the most interesting portion are these children of Israel here gathered together beneath the shadow of Mount Zion. The oppressor hath trampled them into the dust; yet from the dust they are still looking for the restoration of their temporal kingdom, and are still cherishing those splendid dreams by which their fathers were so fatally misled eighteen centuries ago. From all parts of the world they repair to Jerusalem to pass

[1] Sandys, pp. 158—168; Richardson, pp. 267—325; Buckingham, vol. i, pp. 359—378; Elliot, vol. ii, pp. 417—424.

the evening of life, and to be laid, when dead, beside their fathers in the valley of Jehosaphat. Old white-bearded men may be seen sitting in the streets teaching, as of old, young children to read the Law. At certain seasons they go forth, in their best attire, and walk through the streets of their quarter, singing the songs of David and Solomon. For the payment of a small sum of money to the Turk, they obtain permission to assemble, once every year, in the valley of Jehosaphat, and there, seated amongst the graves of their ancestors, with the idolatrous shrine on the mount of Moriah, and the ruins of Zion full in their view, they bewail the departed glories of their nation and the present dispersed and afflicted condition of their race. What an awful monument of prophecy is this fallen remnant of a once powerful nation inhabiting the city of their fathers which, like themselves too, is in ruins. It was surely this picture which the prophet contemplated when he wrote these touching words, "The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, and keep silence: they have cast up dust upon their heads; they have girded themselves with sackcloth: the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground. What shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? for thy breach is great like the sea, who can heal thee? All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?"

We have now completed our journey over Palestine, and are about to leave it. If the reader have shared with us in any degree in the interest of the journey,

he will share likewise our regret in bidding adieu to this land of prophets. We have ascended its mountains, traversed its plains, and examined the ruins of its once princely cities. We have breathed its air, and drank its waters; we have sat beneath the shadow of its solitary palm-trees, and mused amid the sepulchres of its mighty dead: and now, illustrious land! we bid thee farewell. Others claim our homage from the throne of their power; to thee it is willingly rendered although thou art seated amidst thy ruins. Of old time thou wert wont to clothe thyself in purple, and sit on thrones; but the dust has long been thy dwelling, and sackcloth thine only covering. Shall it be always thus? Are thy wounds immedicable? Shalt thou sit for ever on the ground? No. The same hand that hath chastened thee will yet raise thee from the dust, and array thee in thy beautiful garments, and thy latter end shall be better than thy beginning. The mists of superstition, which have covered thee for ages, shedding night upon thy plains, shall pass away, and O how fair upon thy mountains shall the morning break! Thy sons shall come from far, and shall build thy cities; and they who made thee waste shall go forth of thee. Then Lebanon shall begin the song, and Tabor and the dewy Hermon shall return the shout. The ocean, as it rolls around the foot of Carmel, and along the borders of the flowery Sharon, shall prolong the hymn. The cedar on the mountains shall sing to the olive of the vale: the cities on the plain shall shout to the inhabitant of the hills: while the dwellers on the rock shall waft the tidings to the Jordan, that the Lord hath visited and redeemed his land.

CHAPTER XI.

AMMON.

Relative position of the countries of Judea, Ammon, Moab, and Edom—Their rich and beautiful aspect formerly—Skill of their inhabitants in war, commerce, and arts—Possessed at present by barbarians—Zeetzen the first to explore these regions—Boundaries of the country of Ammon—Early history of the nation—Power in ancient times—Prophecy relating to Ammon—A first and second destruction denounced against her—Infliction of her first calamities—Her second and final overthrow—Given to the men of the east—Overthrown by 'brutish men, and skilful to destroy'—Become a spoil to the heathen—Present aspect of the country—Journey from Zsalt to Ammān—Country covered with ruined towns—Soil fertile, yet uncultivated—Approach to Rabbah of the Ammonites—Triumphal arch—Valley of Ammān—Ruins of city—Citadel—Church—Temple—Curved wall—Bridge—Theatre, &c.—Ruins occupied generally a couching place for flocks ...mmān on the east—Aspect and ...ixteen miles—Great number of ... prophecy—Extinction of Am... ...ions.

...ithout the aid of a map, of ...the countries whose present ... with prophecy, it is our de... elucidate, let us imagine a ...red miles in length by a hun...ed on the west by the sea, on ...an desert, and divided into ... by the river Jordan. Then, ... on the west of the Jordan, we ...doms of Israel and Judah; and

on the east of that river, and lying from north to south in the following order, we have the land of Bashan and Gilead, the county of Ammon and the ancient territory of Moab. Again, on the north of the tract, comprising the countries we have just enumerated, we have the kingdom of Syria or Damascus; while, on the south of it, below the lake formed by the Jordan, we have the land of Edom. If the arrangement we have just detailed be kept in view we shall have a tolerably correct idea of the position of the countries to which so frequent allusion is made in Scripture, and whose present condition forms so clear a proof of the truth of prophecy.

Before proceeding to describe the ruin into which those countries have fallen, we shall pause for a moment, and attempt to realize the rich and beautiful aspect they exhibited in former times. Their surface is agreeably diversified with hill and dale; the soil is uniformly good; and, being acted on by a powerful sun, and watered anciently by numerous streams, the great luxuriance with which they were then covered, may be easily imagined. The hills were mantled with vineyards; the valleys and great plains were clothed with rich pastures and luxuriant crops. The magnificence of their art enlivened the beauty of their scenery. Numerous proofs of an abundant population might be everywhere observed; almost every eminence was crowned with a flourishing city; while numerous towns and villages were seen pleasantly seated in valleys, or conveniently placed by the side of streams or rivers.

Nor were these countries distinguished only by the fertility of their soil and the amenity of their

climate. They were not less distinguished by the intelligence and industry of their inhabitants. When

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lers of distinguished name, whose discoveries have evolved the very picture of poverty and desolation, so clearly described ages before in the page of prophecy. No one can deny the facts; for they are now matter of history; and the conclusions which we deduce from these, infidelity itself cannot re

The first of these countries to which we sh our attention is AMMON. Before proceed lustrate the prophecy which foretold the country, we shall point out some facts r of notice in the early history of the n Ammonites, being descended from Lot, to the Jews. The country they inhal the east of the Jordan, between the riv and Arnon. Their northern boundary by the Jabbok. On the south they di approach to Arnon; the territory of M ing considerably northwards of that, first inhabitants of this country were mims,[2] whom the Ammonites conqu sessed. The Ammonites, in their quered by the Amorites;[3] and b of that part of their territory wh dan, they appear to have reti

[1] Genesis, xix,

[2] Probably the same as the Zuzims They appear to have been a race of p that is, of stature rather above the ord the country of Ammon, Moses says— a land of giants. Giants dwelt therein monites call them Zamzummims—a p tall, as the Anakins; but the Lord de and they succeeded them and dwelt i 20, 21.

[3] The Amorites were descended fro Noah. They were the most powerful They had large settlements on the we pear to have sent a colony across that

tains on the east to a district on the borders of the desert.[1] In their journey to Canaan, the Israelites found the Amorites in possession of this part of the country; and being refused permission to pass through their territory, they engaged in battle with them. Their lands having fallen to Israel by right of conquest, Moses divided them between the tribes of Reuben and Gad,[2] who continued to occupy them till they were carried away captive by the king of Assyria.

In the days of Jephthah, the Ammonites revived their claim to their ancient territory, and sent messengers to the two tribes commanding them to evacuate it. To this message Jephthah replied, by detailing the manner in which the lands in question had been taken from the Amorites, and that, as they belonged to Israel by right of conquest, they were not inclined to bestow them on the Ammonites. The result was a war, in which the Ammonites were subdued.[3] They appear to have cherished ever after an implacable hatred against their neighbours the Israelites, and to have allowed no opportunity to pass of invading their country and laying it waste. In these expeditions they generally acted in concert with the Moabites. In the days of Saul a circumstance occurred which illustrates the peculiar cruelty of their disposition. They besieged the city of Jabesh-Gilead, offering to the inhabitants no other terms of capitulation, than that each should have his right eye put out. Their injurious treatment of David's ambassadors drew down upon them the dis-

[1] Not entirely so, however; for in the days of David we find them in possession of Rabbah, which stood on the plain west of the hills. [2] Numbers, xxxii. [3] Judges, xi.

pleasure of that monarch. A war ensued, in which they were severely punished, and rendered tributary to Israel. This yoke, it is probable, they threw off when the ten tribes revolted from the house of David. Long after this they were again defeated in battle by Jotham, king of Judah, who imposed upon them a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, ten thousand measures of wheat, and as many of barley.[1] When the two tribes and a half were carried away captive, the Ammonites appear to have taken possession of their ancient territory, and to have rebuilt and fortified the towns.

They did not long enjoy their new possessions. They soon followed the Jews into captivity, being carried away likewise by Nebuchadnezzar: and as their captivity was almost contemporary with that of the Jews, so was also their return. After their restoration, little is said of them in history. They became subject to the four g
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[1] 2 Chron. xxvii.

it was enriched by trade, that it contained strong and populous cities, and was covered with a line of forts.[1] At this day, whatever spot happens to be cultivated yields the richest returns; and though the country in general is a desert, yet here and there there occur tracts of surprising beauty and richness; and what must have been the original fertility of that soil, which so many ages of neglect have not been able to exhaust? The ruins that cover her plains likewise attest the number of the ancient cities of Ammon. "The plain," says Burckhardt, "which in this part is called El Ahma, is a fertile tract, interspersed with low hills. These are for the greater part covered with ruins. It is evident also, that the whole of the country must have been extremely well cultivated, in order to have afforded subsistence to the inhabitants of so many towns."[2]

How utterly improbable must the desolation of Ammon have appeared at that period. Conquered she might be; but no one who thought of her fertile soil, opulent cities, and extensive commerce, could have believed it possible that so rich a country should remain for ages in ruin—that for many generations her fields should cease to be cultivated and her cities to be inhabited. Yet such was the doom which the prophets denounced against her.

From a comparison of the prophecies relating to Ammon, it is clear that this country was to be visited with a first and second destruction. It was expressly foretold that Ammon should recover from her first overthrow; but after her second desolation she was to be known no more—she was to perish out of the countries.

[1] Gibbon, vol. ix, p. 382. [2] Burckhardt, p. 357.

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will cause an alarm of war to be heard in Rabbah of the Ammonites, and it shall be a desolate heap, and her daughters shall be burnt with fire. Then shall Israel be heir to them that were his heirs, saith the Lord. Howl, O Heshbon, for it is spoiled. Cry, ye daughters of Rabbah, gird you with sackcloth; lament and run to and fro by the hedges; for their king shall go into captivity, and his priests and his princes together. Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys, thy flowing valley, O backsliding daughter? that trusted in her treasures, saying, Who shall come unto me? Behold, I will bring a fear upon thee, saith the Lord God of hosts, from all those that be about thee; and ye shall be driven out every man right forth, and none shall gather up him that wandereth. And afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the Lord."[1] Such were the terms in which her first calamities were foretold. Let us consider how the prophecy was fulfilled.

The days come, saith the Lord, that I will cause an alarm of war to be heard in Rabbah, (the chief city of the Ammonites,) *and it shall be a desolate heap.* When the Jews were carried away captive into Babylon the Ammonites exulted with an indecent pride over their misfortunes, and zealously assisted Nebuchadnezzar in ravaging their country. To punish their sin, the cup of trouble was in a little sent round to these implacable enemies of the chosen people. The Ammonites having assisted in the assassination of Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon

[1] Jeremiah, xlix, 2—6.

had made governor in Judea, the Chaldeans marched against them for the purpose of punishing them for this and other crimes. Rabbah, their capital, was besieged and taken, and, as the prophet had foretold, converted into a desolate heap. The cities throughout their country generally were burned. "Her daughters shall be burnt with fire." Few of the inhabitants escaped the sword; and those that did so were carried to Babylon, together with their wealth, their idols, and their priests. "Her king shall go into captivity, his priests and his princes together." The country was turned into a desert. "Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys, thy flowing valley, O backsliding daughter?" Instead of the proud boast or the scornful laugh with which they had exulted over the miseries of the Jews, nothing was heard throughout their country but the wailings of terror and despair. "Howl, O Heshbon, for it is spoiled; cry, ye daughters of Rabbah."

About the year of the world 3468, Cyrus, king of Persia, having made himself master of the Chaldean empire, granted permission to the Ammonites to return to their own country. "Afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the Lord." Their return was a short time posterior to that of the Jews. Planted a second time in their own country their trade returned, their population increased, and their cities rose into more than their former splendour. Their ancient enmity against the Jews was still retained; and living on their borders, they found frequent opportunities of displaying it. The gospel appears to have been in-

troduced into Ammon in the first ages of Christianity; and the fact is attested at this day by the ruins of churches which are still to be met with in their country. Their prosperity as a nation continued till about the year 635 of the Christian era, when they were invaded and overthrown by the Saracens. It is to this last and final oxerthrow, from which it was foretold the nation of Ammon should never revive, that our attention is now to be turned.

"Son of man, set thy face against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them; and say unto the Ammonites, hear the word of the Lord God, Thus saith the Lord God, because thou saidst aha against my sanctuary when it was profaned, and against the land of Israel when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah when they went into captivity, Behold, therefore I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession, and they shall set their palaces in thee, and make their dwellings in thee. They shall eat thy fruit and they shall drink thy milk. And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the Ammonites a couching place for flocks; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. For thus saith the Lord God, because thou hast clapped thine hands and stamped with the feet, and rejoiced in heart with all thy despite against the land of Israel, behold, therefore, I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and will deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen, and I will cut thee off from the people, and I will cause thee to perish out of the countries. I will destroy thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord."[1]

Ammon retained her prosperity till a period long posterior to the giving of the prophecy. Every suc-

[1] Ezekiel, xxv, 1—7.

ceeding year witnessed the extension of her trade, and every succeeding age saw new cities arise to adorn the country. The longer she existed the infliction of her doom became the more improbable. Prosperity continued to flow upon her, the prediction of the prophet appeared to be forgotten, and Ammon, doubtless, was saying with another city—"I shall sit a queen for ever." As she contemplated from her strong frontier the undisciplined and savage hordes which roamed over the eastern desert, she might bid defiance to the doom with which the prophecy of Ezekiel menaced her. Nevertheless the hour drew on—that fatal hour which dried up the channels of her trade, brought down her princely cities to the dust, and converted her smiling fields into a silent and dreary waste.

I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession. In 632 the country of Ammon, together with all the countries on the east of the Jordan, was invaded by the Saracens—"the men of the east." The inhabitants of Syria were unable to contend with the children of the desert. The valour of the Saracens, inspired by religious enthusiasm, and stimulated by the prospect of enjoying the luxuries of Syria—no feeble temptation, when we consider the naked desert from which they had come—rendered their arms irresistible. At the end of seven years, and after innumerable sieges and battles, in which vast numbers on both sides perished, the Arabians found themselves in possession of the whole of Syria, including the countries of Ammon and Moab. "Behold, I will open the side of Moab from the cities, from his cities which are on his frontiers, the glory

of the country, Beth-jessimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiria-thaim, unto the men of the east, with the Ammonites, and will give them in possession." [1] The words in which Gibbon has recorded this great revolution are strikingly illustrative of the prophecy. "The place of the first conquerors," says he, "was supplied by a new generation of their children." They were not only to conquer, they were to possess the land. "Syria became the seat and support of the house of Ommiyah; and the revenue, the soldiers, and ships of that powerful kingdom were consecrated to enlarge on every side the empire of the caliphs." [2] Thus the conquerors of Ammon set their palaces in it, and made their dwellings in it. And, observe how the other parts of this prophecy were fulfilled. "They shall eat thy fruit and drink thy milk." The troops partook of the delicacies of this delightful region with so keen a relish, that their leader was obliged to employ very effectual measures for restraining them—fearing that their indulgence would extinguish their military valour. But even with all his precautions the first year of their settlement in Syria was marked by a mortality of twenty-five thousand Saracens. Even to this hour the prophecy is fulfilling. The descendants of the conquerors inhabiting the country and consuming its produce are still eating its fruit and drinking its milk.

Observe, too, with what fidelity the prophet described the character of the men by whom Ammon was to be conquered. "I will pour out mine indignation upon thee; I will blow against thee in the fire

[1] Ezekiel, xxv, 9, 10. [2] Gibbon, ix, 422.

of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men and skilful to destroy."[1] The men by whom this rich country was overrun and wasted were fitly described by the appellation of "brutish." From time immemorial the desert had been their dwelling—the professors of an impure faith, and strangers to agriculture and to all the modes of settled life, compared with the highly polished and luxurious nations whom they overthrew, they might well be termed "brutish men." But their ignorance of the arts of peace was equalled by their skill in war. *I will deliver thee into the hand of brutish men and skilful to destroy.* Trained to hardship and fatigue by their penurious climate, and assured by their leader that should they fall in battle the gates of paradise would immediately open to receive them, their ardour rose superior to every obstacle. One rich country fell before them after another. They advanced in their career of conquest, eating the fruit and drinking the milk, till, in the incredibly short period of seven years, they found themselves in possession of all the wealth and luxury of Syria. Thus Ammon fell by the hands of brutish men and skilful to destroy.

The fortunes of the country, since the hour it became a possession of *the men of the east*, have been in striking accordance with what the prophet foretold. *I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and deliver thee for a* SPOIL *to the heathen.* At present this fine country is possessed by the Arabs and governed by the Turks. We have already seen the manner in which the Turks treat the countries which

[1] Ezekiel, xxi, 31.

they govern. In the language of Volney, singularly coincident with that of the prophet, they consider them as a "spoil." Ammon has formed no exception. Everywhere her soil exhibits signs of the greatest fertility; but of what avail are the riches of nature, when they are never turned to account by the industry of man. Spring opens upon her plains; but there the sower is never seen. Autumn comes round; but where no seed has been sown, no harvest can be reaped. On her fields we are able to discover only a few Arabs feeding their flocks on the spontaneous produce, and gathering them at night into the ruins of the cities. And to what is this state of matters owing? It is to be attributed entirely to the tyranny of those who have made the country a spoil. The Arabian peasant in general is but indifferently skilled in the art of husbandry; but the oppression of the ruler, and not the ignorance of the husbandman, is the main cause of the want of cultivation in the country. If we take into account what the peasant pays in the shape of an exorbitant tax, and what he is sure to lose by the incursions of his brethren of the desert, we will see that very little can remain to him of the produce of his land. He finds, that in cultivating the soil he is labouring only for others; and giving up his employment in despair, he returns, perhaps, into the bosom of the Bedouin camp. Thus soils capable of yielding an hundred-fold, are barely sufficient, in the present state of the country, to subsist a few wandering flocks. All travellers unite in deprecating the Turkish tyranny,—in other words, in bearing their testimony to the truth of the prophecy

which foretold that these countries should be a spoil to the heathen. A writer who visited Syria in the end of the seventeenth century speaks of the "Turks ruling with a lawless sway, and not allowing those they injure to complain. Indeed, to consider what intolerable hardships they commonly groan under, especially in places remote from the large cities, and what numbers are enslaved to the will of a few extorting officers and soldiers, in comparison of the whole body of the people, is enough to make men value liberty above all things..... If it were not for that evil, Turkey (Syria) in general is a most inviting country to live in, affording every thing that may gratify the senses; but all those blessings of nature are lost to the miserable inhabitants, who can enjoy no pleasure or satisfaction under such intolerable oppression."[1] Burckhardt, who visited the country a few years ago, after enumerating the various imposts to which the inhabitants are liable, such as the direct tax levied by the government on land, the expence of feeding soldiers on the march, and the tribute paid annually to the Bedouins, to secure them against their depredations, but which oftens fails to ensure their protection, thus concludes —"These various oppressive taxes under which the poor fellah groans, are looked upon as things of course, and just contributions; and he considers himself fortunate if they form the whole of his sufferings. But it often happens that the pacha is a man who sets no bounds to his rapacity; and extraordinary sums are levied upon the village by the simple command issued from the hakim el haouran to the village

[1] 'Journey from Aleppo to Damascus,' p. 28.

sheikh, to levy three or four hundred piastres upon the peasants of the place. On these occasions the women are sometimes obliged to sell their ear-rings and bracelets, and the men their cattle, to satisfy the demand.[1]

Thus far have we shown the fulfilment of the prophecy as regards the land of Ammon. She fell by the hands of brutish men and skilful to destroy. She has been given to the men of the east for a possession; they have set their palaces in her, and made their dwellings in her; they have eaten her fruit and drunk her milk; and from the hour she was conquered to the present day, she has been a spoil to the heathen.

We shall now offer a brief description of the *present* aspect of the country. We shall begin our journey at Zsalt, which is situated twenty-two miles south-east from Abou Obeida, in the plain of the Jordan. The town of Zsalt is placed upon the slope of a steep hill, crowned by a castle, and surrounded on all sides by mountains.[2] Descending the steep on which the town is situated, we turn east and traverse a narrow valley of about a quarter of a mile in length, covered with vine-beds. We next turn off to the south-east, the valley becoming wider and more fertile as we advance. It is well wooded and watered, and capable of a far higher cultivation than it enjoys at present, and of sustaining five times the population that is now found in the neighbourhood. We next ascend a steep hill, where, pausing to review our track, the eye reposes on the village and castle of Zsalt; while in the south-west are the

[1] Burckhardt, p. 303. [2] Ibid., p. 349.

Dead sea, the town of Bethlehem, and the hills of Judah. In front is a stony plain, which we are now to traverse. Having gained its farther extremity, we descend over the brow of the hill in which it terminates, and light at Anab.[1] The rocks of this place abound in grottos, which have evidently been hewn by the hand of man. These caves, which formed doubtless the dwellings of the first inhabitants of the country, are occupied at this day by the shepherds whose flocks feed on the neighbouring hills. The accommodation they offer is in many respects superior to that of houses. They remain perfectly dry when the showers fall; they continue erect though the tempest blows; nor can they be prostrated by the earthquake. Moreover, they are cooler in summer and warmer in winter than houses. Their occupants appreciate their advantages, and regard with pity those who are obliged to inhabit dwellings erected on the surface of the earth. From Anab we descend into the valley below, and cross the dry bed of a torrent. On its banks are sloping moles of masonry and other very ancient remains, which there is reason to think are the relics of buildings erected in the earliest ages of the Jews. Leaving this spot, we ascend a steep hill which rises on the east, and in an hour arrive at Feheis—a ruined city with a spring near it.

On leaving Feheis, we proceed in a more easterly direction than before, and again ascend a rising ground. "The country here," says Buckingham, "was covered with a fine red soil, and exhibited everywhere traces of former cultivation and great fer-

[1] Buckingham, 'Arab Tribes,' p. 61.

tility. On the summit of this hill the wood scenery was beautiful; and the fresh and full foliage of evergreen trees, contrasted with the snowy beds out of which their trunks sprung, was at once new and striking. In the open grounds below we had seen several herds of gazelles; and here, from among the woody thickets by which we were surrounded, rushed forth two large boars, nearly black and seemingly ferocious.[1]

Proceeding on our way eastward, we pass the ruins of several towns, and in about an hour we reach the site of a fallen city, obviously of greater extent and higher antiquity than Feheis. No one edifice remains entire. The dilapidation is so complete, that soil has collected over and between the fallen heaps of stones, in which large trees have taken root, and nearly the whole site is covered with wood. We next enter a thick forest, which extends in breadth for about a mile—its length from north to south being much longer. Traversing this forest, we enter upon an open country, presenting "a great extent of fertile soil lying entirely waste, though it was equal to any of the very best portions of Galilee and Samaria, and capable of producing sustenance for a large population."[2] The country from this to the capital is a plain, diversified with low hills or rather eminences, which are crowned generally with ruins.[3] These memorials of her past power and present decline are scattered over the whole country, but they are very abundant on the plain on which we have now arrived.

[1] Buckingham, 'Arab Tribes,' p. 64. [2] Ibid., p. 66.
[3] Ibid., p. 357.

"Around us," says Buckingham, "in every direction, were remains of more than fifty towns and villages, which were once maintained by the productive soil over which they were so thickly studded."[1] In general, these ruins present nothing to attract the notice of the traveller. It is seldom that a single edifice among the whole remains perfect. All are distinguished, however, by their extraordinary strength—it being not uncommon to find in the remains of the walls of private houses blocks of stone of twenty feet in length. In a few instances the ruins are distinguished by great magnificence. The remains of temples and palaces and theatres are still to be seen, arches broken, pillars fallen, cisterns destroyed; and in some instances we can still trace the bulwarks by which they were defended—all attesting that these were the abodes of a powerful and enterprising people, to adorn which, architecture exerted all her skill and wealth lavished all her stores.[2]

A single glance over this plain is all that is necessary to satisfy us that the prophecy concerning the cities of Ammon has been fulfilled. It was foretold that Ammon should become a desolation;[3] and so completely has the prophecy been fulfilled, that there is nothing but ruins in the country. A profound silence reigns over the land, broken only by the bleating of flocks and the voices of a few solitary Arabs. To the traveller it seems as if he had sur-

[1] Buckingham, 'Arab Tribes,' p. 66.

[2] Almost all the towns of Ammon and Moab were placed on eminences, chiefly perhaps because such situations offered a dryer bottom, a freer air, and a more extensive prospect.

[3] Zephaniah, ii, 9.

vived the human race, and been left to walk alone on a world which had ceased to be inhabited.

In speaking of the cities of Ammon, we must remark that the ruins have never been individually examined. We do not mean that there is any doubt regarding the fact of their complete desolation. The mouldering heaps with which the country is overspread, shaded sometimes by the gloom of the forest, graced in other instances with a few sculptured remains, afford abundant and melancholy evidence of their entire overthrow. But, with the exception of Rabbah, the capital of the Ammonites, no full and satisfactory description has yet been given of any of the ruined cities. It is rare that the jealousy of the inhabitants will allow the traveller even to approach them. In their eyes every European is a magician, nor can they imagine any object he can possibly have for his journey, save to possess himself by enchantment of the treasures which they believe to be buried amongst the ruins.[1] It is worthy of our notice, that while no particular allusion is made in the prophecy to any of the cities of Ammon, with the exception of her capital, no particular description has been furnished of any of them

[1] Of his guide, Mallim Georgis, Buckingham says,—"I have no doubt, from the reputation he seemed to enjoy with every one, that he was a man of integrity, and in matters of common intercourse in life a person of general credit and good faith; yet even *he* made no hesitation to swear by the few hairs of the scanty beard he possessed, that he had seen a Muggrebin at Oom Kais, by the art of magic transport one of the columns of the ruins from that place to his own country, that he had distinctly heard him order it to rise and begone, and that he himself, with his own eyes, had seen it take its flight through the air!"—Arab Tribes, p. 36.

by the traveller; while, on the other hand, those of Moab, whose ruin was individually foretold, have been minutely examined by various travellers, and their present state individually described. This has not happened of chance by any means. We behold in this the hand of Providence opening to the traveller an access to those cities whose ruin had been specially foretold, that the world might know how faithfully the prediction has been fulfilled.

We shall now proceed on our journey. We had arrived on an elevated plain, commanding on the north a very extensive prospect. The eye stretches across the plains of the Hauran to the mountains of the Druses and the chain of Lebanon, which bound it on the north and north-west. The great height of the plain whence this magnificent view opens on us may be judged of from the fact, that the Hauran, when viewed from it, seems sunk in an abyss, and even the snowy tops of Lebanon appear rather below than above the spectator. The plain itself is covered with a fine green turf, daisies, and a large scarlet flower. The soil is extremely rich, with a slight intermixture of small silicious stones.[1] At the distance of about five miles to the eastward are the ruins of Rabbah—the city of which it was foretold—"I will make Rabbah a stable for camels and the Ammonites a couching-place for flocks."[2] Let us draw near and behold the desolations which God hath wrought upon the earth, how he has vindicated the truth of his word, and avenged the wrongs of his people in the ruin of their enemies.

[1] Buckingham, 'Arab Tribes,' p. 66. [2] Ezek. xxv. 5.

Rabbah[1] is approached on the west by a broad pathway which is still lined with stone enclosures. It is easy to imagine the multitudes which thronged this path in times past, going and returning from the capital to the numerous cities on the rich plain around it. Here rolled the chariots of her princes and merchants; but now all is silent; and the traveller is reminded that he is approaching the site of a great city, not by the noise of her multitude nor by her bulwarks rising on his sight, but by the vestiges of ruin visible in all directions. Approaching within two miles of the city, the ground begins to be strewed over with pieces of broken pottery, the quantity increasing as we go on. In the immediate precincts of the town the soil becomes deeper and richer and exhibits signs of former cultivation. The smooth turf gives place to a rougher surface, which has evidently been loosened and furrowed by the plough.

Arriving in the immediate precincts of the city, the first object which meets the eye is a triumphal arch, which remains almost entire. This arch was raised, doubtless, to commemorate the triumphs of some one of the warriors of Ammon; but now it stands here to usher us into a field covered with the trophies of a greater conqueror. Passing below this arch, we descend over a stony slope into the valley. This valley, which is not more than two hundred yards across, runs from west to east, and is bounded on both sides by low hills of flint, which served

[1] The *Rabbath-Ammon* of the Hebrews, the *Philadelphia* of the Greeks, and the *Amman* of the Arabs. This was the city that David sent Joab and the army to besiege, and before the walls of which Uriah the Hittite was smitten that he died.—2 Sam. xi.

doubtless as a foundation for the ancient fortifications of the city. In the bosom of this valley in other days, secure within these strong defences, reposed Rabbah of the Ammonites; and now the same valley exhibits, like an open grave, her mouldering remains to every eye. A turn in the path brings the whole vale at once before the view, covered with a profusion of magnificent ruins. A beautiful stream of water, which continues to wash the ruins of the palaces which it once adorned, is seen gliding through it, and contains to this day an abundance of excellent fish. The principal monuments are situated on the banks of the stream. From the river backward to the base of the hills, the valley is covered with the ruins of private dwellings. On the summit of the northern ridge stands the castle of Ammān—an oblong square filled with buildings. The walls are of great strength, and denote a remote antiquity. They are formed of large blocks of stone, laid one upon another, without cement, and still hold together as when newly placed. The northern slope of the hill being less steep than its other sides, the castle is defended on that quarter by a ditch cut in the rock.

Let us proceed along the valley, and observe the most distinguished of its ruins. The first object we meet, entering from the west, is a small building with niches—probably a temple. A little farther to the east is a spacious church. Part of the walls remain, together with the steeple, which is of a similar shape to those which are sometimes met with in the Hauran. East of the church, on the northern banks of the river, is another temple of plain construction. Advancing a little farther we come to a

curved wall running along the stream. Its bend is turned towards the river; while its concave opens to the north. It appears to have been roofed in, and supported in front by numerous columns, the most of which have fallen, though a few still remain. The form of the building, as well as its position on the stream, appear to warrant the conclusion that it was the public promenade of the citizens. Below this building a broad arch is thrown across the river. Here we shall pass over to its southern bank, and examine the ruins on that side. The brook, which is here twenty feet in breath, appears to have been once paved in the bottom; but the pavement in most places has yielded to the violence of the winter torrents. Proceeding along the river to the east we come to the ruins of a theatre, "the largest," says Burckhardt, "which I have seen in Syria." This monument has suffered little from time, being hewn in part out of the rocky side of the mountain. It contains forty rows of seats—the upper row being hung at a height of two hundred feet above the stage, and forming a circuit of two hundred paces. The front of the theatre was adorned with a colonnade, which when entire must have amounted at least to fifty columns; only eight remain, the architecture of which is Corinthian.[1] It is impossible to say how

[1] The ruined sites in this and the neighbouring countries abound in the remains of theatres, baths, naumachia, and triumphal arches, attesting the passion of the ancient inhabitants for public shows. Buckingham institutes what he means to be a disparaging comparison between the British and Roman colonies in this respect, by remarking that throughout all India, which is far richer than any Roman colony, we have not a public monument equal to the least of these. He forgets that the superiority is on the side of Britain. Wherever true Christianity is in-

many ages this theatre may yet exist. A few paces farther to the east is a large building of a semicircular form. The roof has fallen in and now chokes up the interior. It is probable that this building was devoted to the barbarous sports of the amphitheatre. Looking from the theatre across the stream, we perceive the ruins of a temple. The back wall only remains, richly sculptured. In front are the fragments of columns of a large size. This building is obviously of more recent date than the other edifices of Ammon, and its architecture is much superior. The greater strength of these public monuments has exempted them from the fate which the ravages of war and time have inflicted on the other buildings of Ammon. Not one of her private edifices remains. All that is now to be seen of them are the foundations, and in some instances the door-posts of houses.[1] *Rabbah of the Ammonites shall be a desolate heap.*[2]

The prophecy is as clearly fulfilled in the use to which her ruins are devoted. This city, once the abode of princes, has now been turned literally, as the prophet foretold, into a stable for camels. Camels are driven by hundreds to drink at the stream which flows through it; their bones and skulls lie mouldering in several of the buildings; and the place, Lindsay informs us, is "absolutely *covered* in every

troduced, a taste is diffused for much more intellectual and elevated amusements than the barbarous sports in which the ancient Roman delighted. We would remind Mr. Buckingham of the India Mission. Rome would have covered India with theatres, the Church of Scotland is planting it with schools.

[1] Burckhardt, pp. 357—360; 'Arab Tribes,' pp. 71—80.

[2] Jeremiah, xlix 2.

direction with their dung."[1] *I will make Rabbah a stable for camels.*[2]

The country of the Ammonites, having ceased to be cultivated, now forms one wide range of flocks and herds; at night they are collected into the ruins of the cities, the Arabs gladly availing themselves of the shelter which they afford to the kids and lambs, especially during the severity of the cold season; and as springs are rarely met with in the plain of the upper Belkah, the stream of Ammon renders this place in particular the resort of flocks. Buckingham reposed in the immediate neighbourhood of the ruins, but could not sleep owing to the continual bleating of flocks. Lindsay, in ascending the valley after examining its monuments, met with sheep and goats by thousands coming down to drink.[3] Thus have the words of the prophet been verified both on the land and the cities of the Ammonites, and especially on their capital. *I will make the Ammonites a couching-place for flocks; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*[4]

We leave Ammon on the east by a wide public road similar to that by which it is approached on the west. In ascending from the valley in which the city is situated, we pass numerous graves excavated in the hills which bound it on the north and south—the ancient Necropolis or burial-place of Ammon. The road we are now traversing—formerly crowded with the magnificence of Ammon, but now solitary and untrodden —runs in a S.E. direction over a fine fertile plain,

[1] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 110. [2] Ezekiel, xxv, 5.
[3] 'Arab Tribes,' p. 73; Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 115; Robinson, vol. ii, p. 174. [4] Ezekiel, xxv, 5.

presently covered with green turf. At the distance of ten miles from Ammon, about a furlong from the highway on the right, is the site of an ancient town; the ruins, which are very extensive, and which include many Roman arches, which still remain perfect, and several large columns still erect, show that this was once a place of very considerable importance. The flock of the Arab occupies the site most commonly, and the observations of the traveller are generally made from the highway, the jealousy of the natives rarely allowing him to turn aside and examine the ruins lest he should secrete the treasures they are supposed to conceal. Going forward on the Roman road, which continues to run in the same direction as before, and still lies over a fertile plain, we come, at the distance of three miles, to a remarkable burial place — Yedoody. In a perpendicular cliff, facing to the east, are a series of arched recesses for the reception of the dead; and in the plain, at its bottom, are a number of sarcophagi lying exposed; it is not improbable that this was originally a large sepulchral cave, and the covering having been removed, perhaps to furnish materials for building, the graves dug in the floor, and those worked in the perpendicular walls were alike exposed to view. This supposition, if correct, would give a high antiquity to this place of burial; for no town has been erected here since the time of the Romans, and we can hardly suppose that, unless the graves, even in their time had been empty, they would have encroached on the dwellings of the dead for such a purpose. The ruins of a large town are seen in the neighbourhood, the architecture of which is obviously Roman.

Continuing our way for three miles farther over a soil capable of the highest cultivation, we come to the ruins of another town, still larger than that which we have just left. The site is graced, as usual, with arches, columns, and sarcophagi, all evidently Roman. We have now reached a distance of sixteen miles from Ammon, and shall here terminate our journey. The plain, which had been gently ascending throughout, here gains its highest elevation: and from this point the eye stretches afar into the country of Moab, while on the S.E. the plain is seen running off to the hills which bound it in that direction, forming a barrier between it and the desert, although they do not come in sight till we have gone a few miles beyond our present position. Behind us is the plain we have just traversed, characterised throughout by a rare fertility, yet the eye shall look in vain for a single cultivated spot upon it. In front is another plain, placed on a lower level, still more extensive than the former, and equal to it in point of fertility. Around us in all directions are the ruins of towns, seated generally on small eminences, and all at short distances from one another. The extent and appearance of the ruins warrant the inference that these are the remains of important and opulent cities. There is not a tree in sight so far as the eye can reach, yet the whole plain is covered with the finest soil, and, under regular husbandry, might become the most productive corn land in the world. "For a space of more than thirty miles," says Buckingham, who surveyed the plain from this point, "there did not appear to me a single interruption of hill, rock, or wood to impede immediate tillage;

and it is certain that the great plain of Esdraelon, so justly celebrated for its extent and fertility, is inferior in both to this plain of Belkah. Like Esdraelon, it appears also to have been once the seat of an active and numerous population; but, on the former, the monuments of the dead only remain, while here the habitations of the living are equally mingled with the tombs of the departed, both thickly strewn over every part of the soil from which they drew their sustenance." [1]

Eighteen hundred years ago, a very different scene would have met the eye from this point—opulent towns, girdled with vineyards; wide fields of golden grain, bending beneath the breeze; highways covered with passengers and soldiers; the caravan of the merchant and the chariot of the noble: but now the fields are wasted, and have become a couching place for flocks; desolate heaps mark where the cities stood; and the highways are untrodden save by the Arab, or the stranger from a far country; how truly has Ammon become *a desolation!*

The prophecy has been as exactly fulfilled on the people as on the country and cities of the Ammonites: "I will cut thee off from the people, and I will cause thee to perish out of the countries;" so was it foretold regarding the race of Ammon. This threatening was denounced on account of their implacable hatred to the chosen people, whom they often laboured to destroy; but its execution was delayed long after the period when it was pronounced. The Ammonites were a flourishing people after the Christian era; Justin tells us that in his time (the second

[1] 'Arab Tribes,' pp. 82—86.

century) there were many Ammonites remaining.[1] They appear to have declined in the third century, or mingled with others, for Origen speaks of them under the general name of Arabians, and tells us, that not the Ammonites only, but also the Moabites and Idumeans, were then all known by that name.[2] Those of them who survived the slaughter inflicted by the Saracens in the seventh century mingled probably with the great tide of Arabian invasion and were lost. Certain it is that they are now extinct, and have been so for many ages. The Jews, whom they sometimes spoiled, still exist, though scattered over all the countries of the world; but there is not at this day any people on the face of the earth who bear the name or claim a right to the country of the Ammonites. *The Ammonites are not remembered among the nations.*[3]

We have now concluded our illustrations of prophecy as regards this desolate land; but before leaving it, we shall take another look at its fallen capital. Let us ascend one of the heights by which the city was bordered on the north, and meditate a little on the great lesson spread out before us, and written in the ruins of a kingdom. Ammon in her pride was never so instructive as she now is in her ruin. Yonder on the west rose a triumphal arch. The conqueror and the conquered have ages ago mouldered into dust; and it is affecting to think that this frail memorial has long survived even the memory of the contest. The building near to us on the north of the

[1] Just. Martyr in Dial. cum Tryphone. "Καὶ Ἀμμανιτῶν ἐστὶ νῦν πολὺ πλῆθος." [2] Reland. Palæst. Illust., tom. i, p. 105.
[3] Ezekiel, xxv, 7, 10.

stream, was once a church. There in the latter days of Ammon the gospel was preached, and there doubtless it was despised, else Rabbah of the Ammonites would have remained to this day. Yonder on the south stood a magnificent theatre—the nightly haunt of the gay, the idle, and the licentious. There all the resources of art and all the powers of genius were employed to rivet the chains of vice; and now the stork may be seen perched on its mouldering wall by day, while the owl sings nightly in its desolate recess. Opposite to this retreat of pleasure, and on this side of the stream, was the pillared promenade, whither the citizens of Rabbah repaired at noon or in the "shady eve," and beside the soft murmur of the waters forgot the noise and bustle of the city. Yonder on the east rose the amphitheatre, where the most unfortunate of men were condemned to fight with beasts, that their dying agonies might furnish sport to an inhuman crowd. In the same building the vulture, less greedy of blood, now feeds on the flesh of camels. Near it, on this side of the stream, rose a noble temple—the shrine of the gods of Ammon. Time has hallowed it, and consecrated it as a monument of the Truth of the living and true God. All over the valley were spread the palaces of her luxurious citizens. Such was Ammon eighteen hundred years ago. What is she now? *A desolate heap!* The only remains of her grandeur are a few defaced columns and broken temples, towering amid heaps of rubbish. And why have these been spared? Not merely to proclaim the magnificence of the art which reared them, or the destructive rage of that barbarism which overthrew the buildings of

which they formed a part. They stand there to confirm the prophet and silence the infidel—to proclaim that the Bible is the word of God, and that heaven and earth may pass away, but one jot or one tittle of that word shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.

CHAPTER XII.

MOAB.

Boundaries of Moab—Early history of the nation—Prophecy of its fall—Former fertility of Moab—Proofs from Scripture—From the present appearance of the country—Improbability of the destruction of *all* her cities—Fulfilment of prophecy in this respect—Their number—Strength—Total ruin—Ruins of Elealeh—Heshbon—Baal-meon—Medeba—Keriathaim—Journey south to the river Arnon—Ruins of Dibon—Aroer—Passage of the Arnon—District of Kerek—Ruins of Rabbah, capital of Moab—Numerous ruins south of Rabbah—Pastoral occupations of early times—Moab returned to its primitive state—Prophecy regarding the cities of Aroer—The harvests of Moab ceased—Her vintage at an end—The valley and plain destroyed—Mount Nebo—View from its summit—Utter sterility of some parts of the soil—Wanderers—Condition of the present inhabitants of Moab in point of wealth, intelligence, and political influence—Extinction of the ancient Moabites.

THE country of Moab lay on the east of the Dead sea, having Ammon on the north, Edom on the south, and the Arabian desert on the east.

It is not easy to define the ancient limits of the land of Moab, seeing they appear to have differed at different times. Its southern boundary may be fixed at or near El-Ahsa, which flows into the back-water at the southern extremity of the Dead sea, and is very probably the brook Zered, the first stream which the Israelites crossed on ascending from the wilderness. The Arnon formed its north-

ern boundary—not so, however, either in the earliest or latest times. A considerable portion of the lands north of that river belonged to the Moabites in the early ages; but the Amorite invasion obliged them to relinquish it, and to confine themselves to the territory south of the Arnon. When Sihon, king of the Amorites, was defeated by Israel, Moses planted the two tribes and a half in the conquered territory; and the Arnon continued to form the boundary between Israel and Moab, as it had formerly done between Moab and the Amorites. When the tribes were carried away captive, the Moabites crossed the Arnon and took possession of the lands which belonged to their early ancestors. Heshbon and the numerous towns around were thus included in the territory of Moab; and as a consequence, we find them particularly specified in the denunciations of her ruin.

We shall not detain ourselves by any lengthened history of the Moabites. Their early annals are analogous to those of their neighbours the Amorites. Sprung from the same stock—Lot, the nephew of Abraham—they were distinguished by the same features of character, as well as by the same fortunes as a nation. The haters of the chosen people, we always find them amongst the confederates on the occasion of any league to oppress the Jews. They had grown into a powerful nation at a much earlier period than the children of Israel. While the latter were yet slaves in Egypt, the former were an independent people, inhabiting a fertile and highly cultivated country. This territory they acquired by conquering its original inhabitants—the Emims, "a

people great and many and tall as the Anakims." Their country was well adapted for rearing cattle; and such appears to have been the chief employment of the nation in an early age; and at this day the wells and hewn cisterns and watering-troughs, so necessary to an agricultural people, are still to be seen on the banks of the rivers. At a subsequent period the Moabites exchanged the pursuits of agriculture, in part at least, for those of commerce. Like their brethren the Ammonites, they became successively subject to the four great monarchies; but what they lost in independence, they gained in commercial importance. Their cities, which there is no reason to suppose were other than mean and inconsiderable in the first ages, now rose into importance and splendour; and the prosperous condition of Moab continued till an age long posterior to that in which the prophecy of her ruin was given. Even subsequent to the Christian era her trade was extending, and her towns rising in opulence. Like Ammon, Moab was the theatre of numerous calamities, before she was visited with her final overthrow. In Scriptural times the Chaldeans were employed to chastise her: her doom was completed by the arms of the Saracens. In the middle of the seventh century Moab, together with all the countries lying adjacent to the Jordan, was overwhelmed in the great Arabian invasion, which in its progress to the shores of Africa and Europe, desolated the plains of western Asia.

"Against Moab, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Woe unto Nebo! for it is spoiled. Kiriathaim is confounded and taken; Misgab is con-

founded and dismayed. There shall be no more praise of Moab. The spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape. Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away; for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein. Moab is confounded; for it is broken down. Howl and cry: tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled: and judgment is come upon the plain country, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab far or near."

Such are some of the prophecies which refer to the destruction of the *cities* of Moab. We shall now select a few of those which foretold the desolation of her *land*. "O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer. Thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach even to the sea of Jazer. The spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits and upon thy vintage; and joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the wine-presses. None shall tread with shouting. Their shouting shall be no shouting.[1] The waters of Nimrim shall be desolate; for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing."[2]

So much for the *land* of Moab. Regarding her *inhabitants* it was foretold they should live in a state of great insecurity and wretchedness. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will send unto him wanderers that shall cause him to wander, and shall empty his vessels and break their bottles. Oh ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest

[1] Jeremiah, xlviii, 1—9. [2] Isaiah, xv, 6.

in the sides of the hole's mouth.[1] For it shall be, that as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon."[2]

It was also foretold that the nation of Moab should become small and despised, and in due time cease to be distinguished from others. "The horn of Moab is cut off and his arm is broken, saith the Lord. Make ye him drunken; for he magnified himself against the Lord. Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision. All ye that are about him bemoan him, and all ye that know his name say, how is the strong staff broken and the beautiful rod![3] They shall howl, saying, how is it broken down! how hath Moab turned the back with shame! so shall Moab be a derision and a dismaying to all them about him. Moab shall be destroyed from being a people."[4]

All these particulars were foretold regarding this country—that all its cities should be overthrown—that the land should be impoverished and laid waste—that its once princely towns should become folds for flocks—that its harvests should cease and its vines be destroyed—that in after ages it should be visited by wanderers who should greatly distress its inhabitants—and that its ancient people should become altogether extinct. We now proceed to enquire whether the prophecy has been fulfilled.

This land was not always desolate. When the prophecy of her ruin was given, Moab was a prosperous and powerful country; her rich soil was improved by culture, and her numerous cities were

[1] Jeremiah, xlviii, 12—28.
[2] Isaiah, xvi, 2.
[3] Jeremiah, xlviii, 17—26.
[4] Jeremiah, xlviii, 39, 49.

enriched by commerce. Of this we are able to furnish abundant evidence both from Scripture and from the present state of the country. In the inspired volume Moab is spoken of in terms which characterise it as a country eminently fertile. We read of its streams, its vineyards, its rich pastures; and, which we may also regard as a proof of its power and wealth, its haughtiness and pride. We learn from the story of Ruth, that Moab was sometimes a retreat for the Israelites, when their own country was visited with famine. The testimony of Scripture is powerfully corroborated by numerous and unquestionable proofs which still remain in Moab of its ancient fertility. Its general appearance is that of an uncultivated and abandoned country, yet exhibiting in many places signs of a high degree of cultivation in past ages. The traveller still meets the remains of hanging gardens;[1] and in many places he is able to trace the enclosures of its ancient fields. The sides and bottom of its valleys are in some cases clothed, even at this day, with wild vines and olives; and the rich returns yielded by its soil, wherever it happens to be cultivated,[2] show that it has declined but little, if indeed it has declined at all, from its

[1] Macmichael, p. 246.

[2] It is difficult calculating the exact return yielded by the land of Moab; but the Hauran may be taken as a fair sample in this point of all the countries east of the Jordan. "I have reason to believe," says Burckhardt, "that in middling years wheat yields twenty-five fold. In some parts of the Haouran this year, the barley has yielded fifty-fold, and even in some instances eighty. Where abundance of water may be conducted into the fields from neighbouring springs, the soil is again sown, after the grain harvests, with vegetables, lentils, peas, sesamums," &c. Burckhardt was also informed by a shiekh that he sometimes obtained a return of one hundred and twenty-fold.—Burck., pp. 296, 297.

ancient fertility. The fame of its pastures attracts to it numerous hordes of Bedouins, among whom the riches of the country is a frequent boast, and its possession a cause of keen and constant contention. The district lying on the ancient Arnon, called the Lower Belkah, is superior pasture ground to any in all Southern Syria; so much so, that the Arabs have a saying—"Thou canst not find a country like the Belka."[1] Several portions, it is true, have been smitten with irreclaimable sterility, owing to the sands of the desart and the salt of the Dead sea having encroached upon them; but wherever this is not the case, the land appears to retain all its inherent fertility. The Arabian peasants cultivate small patches of soil, when they have the least prospect of securing the harvest against their enemies, and the produce far exceeds that of the finest lands in Europe. Irby and Mangles gathered a few stalks of wheat which they found growing near Heshbon, and discovered on examining them, that the produce of a single stalk was more than double that of the wheat of our own country.[2] The common opinion of the Arabs is not a mistaken one after all. Vast treasures are indeed buried in their land, which were they drawn forth, would enrich far more than at present live in it. But these treasures are some-

[1] Burckhardt, p. 369.—The Belkah is part of the territory known in Scripture as the land of Jazer—a term which it is probable was applied to the country between the Jabbok and the Arnon.

[2] Irby and Mangles, p. 472.—They compared an ear of Heshbon wheat, in point of weight, and number of grains, with an ear of English wheat, and found the difference as follows:—

	Heshbon Wheat.	English Wheat.
Weight,	103 grains.	42 grains.
No. of grains in the ear,	84	41

what different from those which the imagination of the poor Arab delights to contemplate. A fertile soil constitutes the true wealth of his country; but the Bedouin, ignorant himself of the art of tillage, and despising those by whom it is practised, is as little able to avail himself of these secret riches, as if, according to his own belief, it required an enchanter's wand to bring them to light. The remains of the ancient highways also attest the former flourishing and populous condition of Moab. A broad pathway runs all the way, with very few interruptions, from Rabbath-Moab to the ruins of Heshbon—thus traversing the whole country from south to north. Its breadth is fifteen feet. In most places it is completely paved, and its course is still marked by mile-stones of the times of Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and Severus. These are so little defaced in some instances, that the number of the miles is still legible. There is no doubt that this is part of the great Roman road which began at Akaba, the eastern arm of the Red sea, traversed the countries of Edom, Moab, and Ammon, and extended into northern Syria. Still more decisive evidence of the ancient fertile and populous condition of Moab is to be found in the almost incredible number of her ruined towns. These sites are met with in every part of the country. They exist in close vicinity to one another; and the productive power of that soil must have been great indeed, which could sustain so many cities and so great a multitude of people. If such was the ancient condition of Moab—and of this there can be no doubt—who but Omniscience could have foreseen and

foretold the desolation to which it has now been reduced?[1]

We shall now proceed to compare the prophecy with the present state of this country. It is chiefly occupied with the cities, the fall of which, without one exception, it foretold. *The spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape.*[2] It is rare indeed, even when a country is most severely visited with the scourge of war, that all its cities are destroyed. The places most strongly fortified may be dismantled perhaps; but the great body of the towns generally escape. It is still more rare, even when the cities are destroyed, that they are allowed to lie in ruin for any length of time, provided the soil be able to sustain them and worth the cultivating. It is always the first care, as it undoubtedly is the interest of the conqueror to rebuild them, and, if their ancient inhabitants be extirpated, to plant them with a new colony. In the case of Moab, it would have been thought that the same causes which might tempt the invader—her rich soil and opulent cities—would also furnish him with powerful motives not to treat her with greater severity than it is usually the fate of conquered countries to experience. *They* must be ruthless indeed, and little careful of their own interests, one would have said, who should allow her beautiful architecture to remain for ever in the dust, her fine plains to languish for want of culture, and

[1] Huic (Palæstinæ) Arabia est conserta, ex alio latere Nabatæis contigua, opima varietate commerciorum castrisque oppleta validis et castellis, quæ ad repellendos gentium vicinarum excursus solicitudo pervigil veterum per opportunos saltus erexit et cautos. —Ammian. Mercel., lib. xiv; Reland. Palæst. Illust., tom. i, p. 85.

[2] Jeremiah, xlviii, 8.

her valleys, which in other ages were covered with the mantling vine, to be overrun with useless plants. But the prophets foretold that Moab should experience a severer fate, and the doom they pronounced has long since overtaken her. There is not at this day one of her ancient cities remaining; in the strong figurative language of the prophet, wings have been given unto Moab and she has fled away. Let us ascend the beauteous hill on which in former days stood the ancient Heshbon. From this commanding eminence the eye ranges over the whole country; the vast undulating plain below us is seen spreading itself out in all directions, till it meet the stream of the Jordan and the waters of the Dead sea on the west, the confines of Edom on the south, and the hills which screen from the view the Arabian desert on the east; but throughout the whole extent then under the eye, we behold not one inhabited city. On all sides we are encompassed by ruins. Heaps of rubbish, broken walls, fallen columns, cover her eminences, and obstruct the banks of her rivers, while the only signs of life which are visible are the black tents of the Bedouin, pitched beside some ruined city, which serves as a fold to his flocks and herds. From the same spot from which an hundred cities might be seen of old, the traveller now beholds as many ruins. "Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away; for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein. Judgment is come upon the plain country; upon Holon, and upon Jahazah, and upon Mephaath, and upon Dibon, and upon Nebo, and upon Beth-diblathaim, and upon Kiriathaim, and upon Beth-gamul, and upon Beth-

meon, and upon Kerioth, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near."[1]

The universal ruin of the cities of Moab is the more surprising that the buildings of that land, if one may judge from the ruins that remain, appear to have been constructed for great duration. Blocks of stone of immense size not unfrequently occur in the walls of ruined houses, and in many instances stone beams appear to have been laid upon the top of the walls so as to reach from side to side, and either wholly form the roof of the building, or support it.[2] This kind of masonry was liable to suffer little from the ravages of war or the lapse of time; and the great number of her cities, taken in connection with the peculiar character of their architecture, doubtless encouraged in Moab that arrogancy and pride and haughtiness of heart for which the prophet reproved her, and the fall of which he foretold; nor is it surprising that she should have deemed the destruction of so many cities, planted too in a territory which afforded every promise of their perpetuity, impossible. But the word of the prophet has prevailed. Neither the number nor the strength of the palaces of Moab could avert their fate. No city has escaped; all have fallen; and while the traveller surveys with astonishment the wide scene of desolation spread around him, he remembers the prophecy, *They shall cry, saying, How is it broken down?*

Still there is one inhabited city in this land—Kerek. But the existence of this town, which is nothing more than a miserable hamlet, forms, we conceive, no objection to the prophecy which fore-

[1] Jeremiah, xlviii, 9, 21–24. [2] Buckingham, 'Arab Tribes,' p. 100.

told the universal fall of the cities of Moab. For, first, it is doubtful whether the position of this place be actually within the limits of the land of Moab; it stands not far from the southern border of the kingdom, and some believe, among whom is the learned editor of Burckhardt,[1] that it is situated within the boundary of the ancient Edom. Nor, second, is it of much importance to determine whether this city belonged to Moab or Edom. It obviously is not one of the ancient towns of Moab; its name does not occur in the prophet's list of those destined to be overthrown; it possesses no architectural monuments which can entitle it to lay claim to a high antiquity; and even though it should be admitted that it stands upon an ancient site, yet, in that case, as the former city has been swept away by the tide of war, the mere fact that the ground is now occupied by this comparatively modern town cannot in the least invalidate what we have said regarding the fulfilment of the prophecy, *The spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape.*

A general description can never be so impressive as a particular one. The latter is always to be preferred where it can be obtained; but in the present case we account that there is a special propriety and even necessity for this. In the prediction of the prophet we find that the cities of Moab are mentioned by name, and seeing the researches of recent travellers have made us acquainted with their existing individual state, it appears incumbent on us to adduce particular as well as general evidence that the prophecy has been fulfilled, *The cities thereof shall be*

[1] Burckhardt, Preface. pp. 9, 10.

desolate without any to dwell therein. We must premise that the ruins of this land are of no intrinsic interest whatever, they possess nothing of the grandeur which distinguishes, in some instances, the ancient sites of Ammon and Edom. The ruins of Moab are mere heaps of rubbish, which the Arab has trodden down for ages, till at last they are so mingled with the soil that it is rare to find any architectural ornaments remaining: *Moab is confounded; for it is broken down. Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.*[1] But although they possess no interest as ruins, it is otherwise when we view them as monuments of the truth of prophecy; this invests them with an impressive and solemn character, to which, as mere ruins, however fine, they could assert no claim. In offering a concise account of the present aspect of the more distinguished of the ancient cities of this land, we shall follow the supposed course of a traveller from north to south.

First, then, we come to the ruins of El Aal—the ancient Elealeh. These ruins are situated on the summit of a small hill, about midway between the Jabbok (Zerkah) and the Arnon (Modjeb). They are of little importance save in the character already alluded to. The ground is covered with water cisterns, fragments of walls, and foundations of houses. The wall by which the city was enclosed may yet be traced in some places. The plain around is alternately chalk and flint.[2] We survey the site, and think of the prophet's lament, *I will water thee with my tears, oh Elealeh!*[3]

[1] Isaiah, xxv, 10. [2] Burckhardt, p. 365. [3] Isaiah, xvi, 9.

The site of Huzhban—the ancient Heshbon—possesses stronger attractions. Elealeh and Heshbon were joined by proximity of place, and the prophet has joined them in the same prediction of ruin; they flourished together, perished together, and now lie together in ruin. *Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh.*[1] The remains of this ancient town are scarcely two miles south west of Elealeh; they are placed upon an eminence, which owes the extensive prospect it affords the traveller rather to the level character of the country around than to its own height. The remains are those of a large town, the space covered by the ruins is about a mile in circuit, and amongst the objects of greatest attraction are deep wells cut in the rock, the remains of a temple on the summit of the hill, and, at the west end of the town, a building of very peculiar architecture, itself very ancient, yet composed of the remains of some building still more ancient. The site is graced by a few shafts of columns, which are still erect. The ground around, which is a fine red earth, is covered with broken pottery the usual accompaniment of a deserted and ruined city. Heshbon was in early times the residence of Sihon, king of the Amorites; latterly, though it had declined from the rank it still retained the splendour of a capital, and was the most magnificent city in all Moab, north of the Arnon. Its present condition is such as we have described. Heshbon has gone down, with her sister cities, to the sides of the pit.

The prospect, from the eminence on which it stood is, as we have said, a very extensive one; and

[1] Isaiah, xv, 4.

this, perhaps, is the best point from which to judge of the general character and aspect of the country. The eye at this day reposes only on desolate plains, but far otherwise must the view have been when Moab was covered with cities, vineyards, and rich pastures. On the north of the town, divided from the eminence on which it stood by a little valley, is a hill whose side is hewn into numerous graves—the ancient necropolis of Heshbon. On the west, the eye stretches across the stream and valley of the Jordan, and reposes on the towers of Jerusalem and the roofs of Bethlehem; in the south-west are the dark mountains which overhang the western shore of the Dead sea, the waters of which are just perceptible. To the south the view is almost boundless. The whole of the lower Belka—a term which comprehends the country south to the Arnon—is here under the eye. This great plain is seen to be of a rolling description, slightly diversified by undulations which run from west to east, and have pleasant valleys between, appearing much as if a large swell of the sea had been suddenly arrested in its progress.[1] The position of this city must have made it conspicuous over almost the whole country. The beauty of its palaces might be seen from beyond the Arnon on the south and the Jordan on the west; but the light of Heshbon is now darkened, and the prophecy is fulfilled, as it is read by some, *There shall be no more vaunting of Moab because of Heshbon.*[2]

"At about three quarters of an hour" (two and a half miles) "south-east of Hesban, are the ruins of

[1] Burckhardt, p. 365; Buckingham, 'Arab Tribes,' pp. 105—109; Robinson, vol. ii, p. 191. [2] Jeremiah, xlviii, 2.

Myoun, the ancient Baal-meon."[1] This is all the notice which Burckhardt takes of a city which Ezekiel ranks among those frontier towns which formed the glory of the country.[2] But the brief notice of the traveller is enough to verify the prediction of the prophet, *Judgment is come upon Beth-meon.*

Medeba is another of the ancient towns of Moab against which judgment was denounced, and on which judgment has now been inflicted. The ruins of this town are about seven miles to the south-east of Heshbon. They are situated on a round hill, and cover a space of about two miles in circumference. The most remarkable objects among the ruins are the remains of a large temple on the west end of the town, which has the appearance of great age, and from two columns that remain, seems to have belonged to the Doric order of architecture, and a large water tank, which, in so dry a climate, must have been of essential service to the inhabitants. The rest of the site is covered with the remains of private dwellings, the walls of which appear to have been constructed of large blocks of silex. Not a single edifice remains entire: the city is completely ruined.[3] *Moab shall howl over Medeba.*[4]

Nearly two miles west of Medeba are the ruins of Keriathaim, which now bear the Arabic name of El Teym. There is nothing remarkable here save a large water tank cut entirely in the rock.[5] In a climate like that of Moab a regular supply of water was of first importance, and accordingly nothing is so

[1] Burckhardt, p. 365. [2] Ezekiel, xxv, 9.
[3] Burckhardt, p. 366. [4] Isaiah, xv, 2.
[5] Burckhardt, p. 367.

frequently met with on these ruined sites as tanks and cisterns for receiving the rain water. Keriathaim is also ranked by Ezekiel amongst the cities whose magnificence formed the glory of the country; its splendour is now buried in the earth, and its former renown can procure it no respect from the Arab by whom it is trodden down, *as straw is trodden down for the dunghill. Keriathaim is confounded and taken.*

We leave the ruins of this city and proceed southwards over the fine plain of the Belkah; we cross the Mayn and ascend the rising ground beyond it, when Mount Nebo comes into view towering on our right; the track lies along the base of this celebrated mountain, which still looks over the streams and plains and hills of that beauteous land which Moses was permitted to see but not to enter. In a little we cross the Wale. This stream, whose banks are thickly clothed with oleanders, is the summer retreat of one of the most miserable of the tribes of the desert. Ascending its southern banks, we enter upon an extensive and level tract, to which the Arabs give the name of El Koura, or the plain, and which, there is little doubt, is the plains of Moab of Scripture. Pursuing our way for about eight miles from the banks of the Wale, we arrive at another stream of considerable scriptural interest, the Arnon (Wady Modjeb), the boundary of Moab in those early times when the Amorite inhabited the lands over which we have just passed.[1]

About three miles before reaching the banks of the Arnon are the ruins of Diban—the ancient Dibon.

[1] Burckhardt, pp. 369—371.

The fate of this city is well worthy of our attention, so exactly has it verified the doom which the prophet pronounced upon it. Dibon, in respect of position, was fortunate beyond most of the cities of this land; it was placed in a low part of the plains of Moab, betwixt two rivers, at no great distance from either, and the fields around it being capable of an easy and abundant irrigation, it is natural to suppose that the rich verdure with which they were clothed would seldom fade; but it was foretold of Dibon that the streams at which it drank should be dried up, and that a thirsty wilderness should be spread around it; and, though the prediction was very improbable at the time it was given, we now behold it fulfilled. The sands of the desert have encroached on that part of Moab in which this town was situated. Barrenness has come in the room of fertility; and the ruins of Dibon, which are of considerable extent, are now found by the traveller lying on a sandy plain: *Thou daughter that dost inhabit Dibon, come down from thy glory, and sit in thirst.*[1]

On the north bank of the Arnon are the ruins of Araayr—the Aroer of the Scriptures. This city stood, not on the immediate banks of the stream, but on the edge of the high precipice by which the valley of the Arnon is overhung. Of Aroer nothing can be said but what is common to it with all the cities of Moab—that it is completely destroyed.[2] The parable used concerning it in ancient times might again be taken up: "There is a fire gone out of Heshbon, and a flame from the city of Sihon; it

[1] Burckhardt, p. 372; Irby and Mangles, p. 462; Jeremiah, xlviii, 18. [2] Burckhardt, p. 372.

hath consumed Ar of Moab, and the lords of the high places of Arnon."[1] *Howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon that Moab is spoiled.*[2]

On the farther banks of the stream on which we are now arrived, the camp of the Israelites was for some time pitched; and we can easily imagine the delight which the cool brook and the beautiful verdure of the valley must have ministered to the Hebrew host after a sojourn of forty years in the wilderness. Here the command was given to the tribes to rise up and pass over the stream, and begin the wars which were to issue in their full settlement in the land of promise; it is probable that they crossed near the point at which we are now arrived. The breadth of the valley here at the top is estimated by Burckhardt at not less than two miles in a straight line; its depth is proportioned to its breadth. To the eye of the spectator its high and precipitous banks offer no means of descent; but after examining them more carefully, he finds traces of the Roman causeway, interrupted at times, no doubt, and mostly covered with rocks and stones, but still in such a state as to afford him material aid in descending. On arriving at the bottom, which he does generally in thirty-five minutes, he finds a narrow "stripe of verdant level about forty yards across." In the midst is the river, which in its usual state is not more than three paces across; but its banks bear evidence to the violence and frequency of the winter torrents. The fragment of a bridge remains, consisting of a

[1] Numbers, xxi, 28. The Ar mentioned here is the capital of Moab. By the 'high places of Arnon,' we are to understand undoubtedly the cities, and perhaps the idolatrous shrines which stood on the banks of that river. [2] Jeremiah, xlviii, 20.

high arch which is altogether unserviceable. The valley is but indifferently clothed, containing only a few tamarisks, and here and there an oleander. The southern bank is equally precipitous with the northern; and the ascent of the traveller is accomplished by means of the Roman road, which resumes on the other side of the stream, and continues to run southward through the country.[1]

On ascending from the valley of the Arnon we find ourselves in the district of Kerek; the country, which is mostly level, possesses a soil of great fertility. Here we perceive the same signs of desolation as on the north of the river; fields uncultivated and cities lying in ruins. Innumerable towns meet our gaze, all of them *trodden down*, and *desolate without any to dwell therein.*[2] Of the ruined sites with which the country in this quarter abounds, we shall select one for description: in one respect the most remarkable ruins in the country, but offering little in another to attract or detain the eye of the traveller. At the distance of twenty-five miles south of the Arnon, we arrive on a low hill which commands the plain around, and is covered with a few uninteresting ruins. This is Rabbah, the capital of Moab.[3] It was over this city, whose palaces then covered this now naked eminence, that the prophet poured this lament, "Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; mine heart

[1] Burckhardt, pp. 372, 373; Irby and Mangles, pp. 460—462.
[2] Burckhardt, p. 376; Irby and Mangles, p. 456.
[3] It was sometimes called Ar, or Ariel, Rabbath-Moab to distinguish it from Rabbah of the Ammonites. In Isaiah, xvi, and Jeremiah, xlviii, it is called Kir-hareseth, and Kirheres—the city with walls of burnt brick. The Greeks called it Areopolis.

shall mourn for the men of Kir-heres."[1] There is not at this day, either dwelling or inhabitant on the spot, there is nothing even amongst her ruins which could betoken that the city had ever possessed the wealth and splendour of a capital—*Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence.*[1] In the tabernacles of Moab how often did the enemies of the chosen people assemble and take "crafty counsel," and pointing to the mountains beyond the Jordan, say, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance:"[2] but the ruin which Moab devised against others has fallen upon herself. Considering that this was the capital, the ruins cover a very disproportionate space —not much more than a mile in circuit; but it is probable that great part of the city is buried in the earth. The remains are chiefly those of private dwellings, their appearance indicating unusual strength. The ruins of a temple still remain; the gate of another edifice and two Corinthian columns. In a plain west of the ruins is an insulated altar; but no worshipper is there. The shrine is forsaken and desecrated.[3] *Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Beth-el their confidence.*[4] Irby and Mangles say that they could find no traces of the city walls: *For the foundations of Kir-hareseth* (the city with walls of burnt brick) *shall ye mourn; surely they are stricken.*[5]

Of the towns mentioned both in Isaiah's and in Jeremiah's prediction of the ruin of Moab, there are many

[1] Isaiah, xv, 1. [2] Psalm lxxxiii, 4.
[3] Jeremiah, xlviii, 13. [4] Isaiah, xvi, 7.
[5] Burckhardt, p. 377; Irby and Mangles, p. 457.

of which we have said nothing. We have confined our attention to those which travellers have been able to identify with some existing site. The ruined cities we have described are not one tenth of those with which the country abounds. The following words of Irby and Mangles will give us some idea of the multitude of the ruins to be met with in Moab: "The whole of the fine plains in this quarter are covered with sites of towns on every eminence or spot convenient for the construction of one." Our travellers were at that time about twelve miles south of Rabbah. The commencement of their journey next morning is thus described: "This morning we were off before sunrise; the same downs continued, with numerous Arab camps in various directions, the ruined sites being still in numbers all around us."[1] We have before us abundant evidence that the prophecy has been fulfilled: *There shall be lamentation generally upon all the house-tops of Moab, and in the streets thereof; for I have broken Moab like a vessel wherein is no pleasure, saith the* LORD. *Moab is spoiled and gone up out of her cities.*[2]

It is of little importance to determine the time or the manner in which the cities of Moab were overthrown, seeing the prophecy is so clearly fulfilled in their total and universal ruin. No history contains any lengthened account of their fall. We find them existing in splendour at the beginning of the Christian era. We lift the veil after a lapse of eighteen centuries, and discover them in ruins. It is probable that they were overthrown at the same period with the towns of the Ammonites. The tide of

[1] Irby and Mangles, pp. 370, 371. [2] Jeremiah, xlviii, 15, 38.

Arabian invasion, which issued from the Desert in the middle of the seventh century, overwhelmed all these countries at the same time; and to this event we conceive the prophet alludes in the following words, in which he pourtrays with equal fidelity and beauty the martial valour of the Saracens, and the terror with which they inspired the effeminate inhabitants of Syria, the rapidity with which they overran the country, and the utter ruin which they brought along with them: "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and spread his wings over Moab. Kerioth is taken, and the strongholds are surprised, and the mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs. And Moab shall be destroyed from being a people because he hath magnified himself against the Lord." [1]

This closes the evidence for the fulfilment of the prophecy, so far as the cities of Moab are concerned; we are now to turn our attention to other predictions which refer to the general state of the country and its inhabitants.

The cities of Aroer are forsaken; they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.[2] By the "cities of Aroer," we are undoubtedly to understand those which lay adjacent to the Arnon—the stream on which the city of Aroer was built. It is unnecessary to adduce any additional evidence that these cities are forsaken: we are now to show that they are devoted to the use which the prophet foretold—folds where flocks may lie down.

[1] Jeremiah, xlviii, 40—42. [2] Isaiah, xvii, 2.

Were one to be suddenly transported to the country of Moab, and to see its plains covered with shepherds' tents, and flocks and herds roaming without restraint over its hills and valleys, he would be apt to imagine that it were yet the morning of the world, or that the ages of pastoral simplicity and freedom, of which poets have sung, had again returned. Such must its appearance have been in those early days, when the Moabite shepherd fed his flock on the sides of Pisgah, or led them to drink at the streams of the Arnon;—when the cities were yet in their infancy, and the immediate descendants of Lot were scarcely numerous enough to possess the fields from which a gigantic race had been lately expelled. The record of the peaceful occupations of those early days may yet be read on the soil of Moab. On the banks of the Wady el Themed—a small stream in the northern part of the country, are numerous wells, cisterns, and watering troughs for cattle, hewn in the rock, and coeval, doubtless, with the earliest occupation of the country; the wells and cisterns are inscribed with characters which belong to no known language.[1] Since these wells were dug and these characters inscribed many ages have rolled over the country, the arts of peace and war have risen and declined in Moab, civilization has shone and set, and now the latter end of the country is like its beginning—with this difference, that the race by whom it is at this day occupied combine the poverty and freedom of the pastoral life, with the vice which wealth and civilization bring along with them. The whole country of Moab is possessed by shepherds and their

[1] Buckingham, 'Arab Tribes,' p. 98.

flocks; but this is especially the case with regard to the districts north and south of the Arnon, the part of the country to which the prophecy we have quoted points. The fame of the Belkah among the Arabs is unrivalled in point of pasturage; and the southern banks of the Arnon appear, not less than the northern, to be the resort of the Arabian flock. Scarcely had Burckhardt crossed this stream when he found himself amongst Bedouin shepherds, and the first night he spent in this part of the country was in an encampment of this sort.[1] While the whole country is pasture ground, the cities serve as folds. A stream is generally found in the vicinity of a ruin, regard having been had to this when the city was built. For the convenience of water, therefore, the flocks are gathered commonly into the ruins at night, while their owners encamp at a little distance in some sheltered valley, or sleep in the grottos with which many parts of the country abound. This circumstance has led to the fulfilment of the prophecy which affirmed, that whilst the cities of Aroer should be forsaken of man, they should *be for flocks to lie down in.*

Not only was it foretold that flocks should lie down in the cities of Aroer, but that they should do so, "*and none should make them afraid.*" At first sight it might seem that all which the words of the prophet imply is simply the utter desolation of these cities—that they should be so entirely abandoned that there would be no inhabitant to scare away the flock of the Arab. In this sense the words of the prophet have been fulfilled; but they contain, we conceive, a

[1] Burckhardt, p. 375.

further meaning. In a country which is overrun by hostile and plundering tribes, amongst whom a petty system of warfare is continually going forward, and where a party of natives cannot encamp for a single night without planting a watch on the top of some neighbouring eminence, lest the encampment should be robbed before morning, it is rare indeed that the shepherd is able to fold his flock in security; and yet that security is enjoyed to a very considerable degree in the district of Kerek: "The inhabitants of Kerek," says Burckhardt, "have thus become formidable to all the neighbouring Arabs; they are complete masters of the district of Kerek." [1] The consequence is, that the flocks which lie down in Aroer and her cities do so without any making them afraid.

The full force and beauty of this prophecy is seen only when it is compared, as we have already done, with the prediction given concerning Babylon: "Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there." [2] To say simply that the prophets revealed the future *desolation* of the countries of Babylon, Moab, and Ammon, is not enough; they minutely characterised the desolation of each, and showed wherein it should differ from that of the other. The cities of Moab were to be folds for sheep, the lands of Ammon a couching place for flocks, while the territory of Chaldea was to be laid so utterly desolate as to be forsaken even by the shepherd. And the state of matters in each country is exactly such as the prophets foretold. At this day it would be just as vain to look for the tent of

[1] Burckhardt, p. 382. [2] Isaiah, xiii, 20.

the Arab on the plains of Babylon as it would be to expect to find it absent from those of Moab and Ammon.

The next prophecy to which we advert relates to the harvests of Moab, of which it was foretold that they should cease: "The shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen."[1] "And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field and from the land of Moab."[2] The continued desolation of her bounteous soil was just as improbable when the prediction was delivered as the total ruin of her numerous cities. One would have thought that so long as the same sun warmed her plains and the rains descended to water them that the harvests of Moab would continue to be gathered in in the rich abundance of former times; yet at this day it is eminently true that joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field and from the land of Moab. One would suppose that so rich a soil might tempt even the lazy Arab; but the hand of nature alone cultivates it, and the Bedouin is quite satisfied if it yields him pasturage for his flock. Summer and winter, seed time and harvest revolve, but the fields of Moab exhibit at every season the same scene of neglect: *The shouting for the harvest is fallen.* Indeed to sow in such a land would be vain; for Moab, even still more than Judea, is exposed to the incursions of the tribes of the wilderness, who, although they hold the cultivator of the soil in the utmost contempt, never scruple when it is in their power to benefit by his labours. Of this the poor Fellah by dire experience is well aware, and obeys at once the dictates

[1] Isaiah, xvi, 9. [2] Jeremiah, xlviii, 33.

of his prudence and sloth by forbearing to tempt the cupidity of his brother Arab. It is true that travellers speak sometimes of luxuriant crops, and reapers busy in the field in the neighbourhood of Kerek; but almost the only cultivated spots in the country occur in that vicinity, and this miserable remnant of the ancient harvests of Moab, so far from affording any objection to the prophecy, tends only to show with what affecting truth it has been fulfilled. Joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field. The account which Buckingham gives of the appearance of the fields around Heshbon is in surprising accordance with the prediction of the prophet. The soil, he tells us, is a fine red earth, but has lain long undisturbed by the plough, and is mostly covered with broken pottery; some portions had been tilled, and young wheat was growing on them, but the state of the crop may be judged of from the fact that the broken pottery was nearly as thickly strewn over the tilled as over the neglected portions.[1] *I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, for the shouting for thy harvest is fallen. The fields of Heshbon languish.*

It was also foretold that the *vintage* of Moab should fail. "O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer: thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach even the sea of Jazer: the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits, and upon thy vintage. I have caused wine to fail from the wine-presses: none shall tread with shouting; their shouting shall be no shouting."[2] The vineyards of Moab are mentioned at a very early period; and from the way in which

[1] Buckingham, 'Arab Tribes,' p. 106. [2] Jeremiah, xlviii, 32, 33.

Sibmah is introduced into the prophecy, it appears to have been famous for its vines;[1] but now the vine has ceased to be cultivated and wine to be drunk in this land. The spoiler has fallen upon the vintage of Moab. Neither Burckhardt, nor any other traveller, ever say that they once tasted wine all the time they were in the country; a few straggling vines and fig-trees are all that now remain—the gleanings of the once numerous vineyards of Moab. As the nakedness of her plains is seldom relieved by the vine, so their silence is never enlivened by the joyous shouts of those who tread the wine-press. Although the prophet had written in our day he could not have given a more graphic description of matters as they presently exist in Moab than he has done in the following words: *In the vineyards there shall be no singing neither shall there be shouting: the treader shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage-shouting to cease.*[2]

The fulfilment of the next prophecy to which we advert is less clearly marked, because the locality to which it applies is less certainly known; *The waters of Nimrim shall be desolate.*[3] A little to the south of the town Zsalt, near to the Jordan, are the ruins of a city called Nymreim,[4] very probably the ancient Nimrim; if so, the waters alluded to in the prophecy are those of the river Shoeb, on the banks of which these ruins are found. Flowing through a desert,

[1] This town, of which no traces remain, so far at least as the discoveries of travellers have yet gone, appears to have been situated not far from Heshbon. Jerome places Sibmah at the distance of five hundred paces from Heshbon.—Reland. Palæst. Illust., tom. ii, p. 1003.

[2] Isaiah, xvi, 10.

[3] Isaiah, xv, 6.

[4] Burckhardt, p. 355.

and amidst the ruins of cities, we may well regard the prophecy concerning the waters of Nimrim as fulfilled. *They are desolate.*

There is less doubt regarding the next prophecy, *The valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the Lord hath spoken.*[1] There is no doubt that the valley referred to in this prediction is that part of the plain of Jordan which lay east of the river, within the territories of ancient Moab, and which is called by the Arabs to this day, El Ghor, or the valley. It might have been hoped that its abundant fertility in ancient times, being watered by the Jordan, and by numerous streams which descended from the hills, would procure it exemption from the sentence of desolation; but the prophet foretold that the beauty of this rich valley should depart, as well as that of tracts less favoured by nature—and the sentence has taken effect. It is still watered by the same streams as of old; but their influence is not sufficient to counteract the sterility with which the salt of the Dead sea has covered it. Its great heat renders it very unhealthy. It is chiefly visited by the Bedouins in winter, or after the rains have fallen; but they soon leave it in spring, its herbage being burnt up sooner than that of the surrounding districts. While the hills of Gilead on the east are yet clothed with the blossoms of summer, the whole valley of the Jordan is parched and withered. *The valley also shall perish.*

And the plain shall be destroyed. The locality referred to here, and which the prophet predicts should in after times be distinguished by its greater desolation, is doubtless the same with that which was

[1] Jeremiah, xlviii, 8.

formerly known as the plains of Moab. This tract was situated between two rivers, the Wale and the Modjeb (Arnon), and there can be little doubt, from its favourable position and the manner in which it is noticed in Scripture, that it was one of the most fertile parts of the country. It is still known among the Arabs by the name El Koura, or the plain. At this day it is decidedly the worst part of all Moab. "The soil," says Burckhardt, "is very sandy, and not fertile."[1] *The plain shall be destroyed, as the Lord hath spoken.*

On the north-western border of this plain rises Mount Pisgah—the hill from which Moses before his death obtained a sight of the Land of Promise. As every thing has interest which relates to this celebrated mountain, we shall pause for a little to describe its general appearance, and attempt to realize the memorable scene once transacted on its summit. This hill is barren in its general character, and its top is marked by a heap of stones, overshadowed by a wild pistachio tree. Here we may suppose the prophet stood when he viewed the land.

Elevated on the top of Pisgah, beneath the clear skies of Syria, the eye of Moses, which age had not dimmed, might easily survey—not the Land of Promise only—but all the countries around it. Immediately below him were the gentle but innumerable eminences of Moab, girdled with vineyards and crowned with cities. On the north, beyond the waters of the Jabbok, were the verdant hills of Gilead and the rich pastures of Bashan. In the distant south rose the dark mountains of the land of Edom;

[1] Burckhardt, p. 371.

while above them all, in solitary grandeur, towered Mount Hor—the resting-place of his brother Aaron. At the foot of Hor, stretching away to the south and west, was the mighty wilderness, where for forty years Moses had governed the tribes—the scene of stupendous miracles and deliverances. But it was on the country beyond the Jordan that the eye of Moses reposed with the greatest delight. There, spread out beneath him, were the hills, the valleys, and the streams of the good land which the Lord had sworn to give to Israel. When this promise was made, the chosen seed were "very few and strangers in it;" but now they had grown to a great nation, and their tents were spread forth on the plain below "as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign-aloes, which the Lord hath planted." They had not indeed crossed the Jordan; but Moses knew that the "Captain of the Lord's host" stood ready to open the gates of the country, and afford them entrance. And O how beauteous the land which the Lord their God had given them! From the border-plain of Beersheba in the south, to the towering summits of the "goodly" Lebanon—from the streams of the Jordan, which watered the rich valley at his feet, to where the waves of the "Great sea" broke upon the western shore—the eye of Moses surveyed it all. While gazing on this beauteous sight, the eyes of the prophet were for a moment closed, and immediately thereafter opened on a better land than Canaan![1]

[1] Pisgah appears to have been a summit in the range of Abarim—the name given to the mountains which ran on the east of the Dead sea. At this day the name given to Pisgah among the Arabs—at least to the hill which travellers commonly take to be

The utter desolation of the soil of Moab was foretold in the following terms:—*As I live, saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation.*[1] The soil of this country, although in most places it retains all its inherent fertility, is in others covered with the same signs of sterility as the country around the lake of Sodom. This certainly is the meaning of the prophecy, and not that the land of Moab should be destroyed by fire from heaven, like the cities of the plain. Many tracts in Moab are at this moment literally strewn over with salt and sulphur; and the soil in many places is chalky and barren, and produces only unserviceable plants. It is a place for the breeding of nettles and salt pits. "As we proceeded onward,"

the ancient Pisgah—is Djebel Attarous. It is situated a few miles east of the northern extremity of the Dead sea. It is the highest mountain in the neighbourhood; and to this circumstance mainly it appears to owe the distinction which has been conceded to it. It may be questioned, however, whether this be the ancient Pisgah. Eusebius and Jerome place Mount Nebo at the distance of seven miles from Heshbon, a position which does not altogether agree with that of the *modern* Pisgah. From any of the summits in the neighbourhood Moses might have obtained the same extensive prospect. There was nothing, we conceive, miraculous in the view. Volney (vol. i, p. 229) informs us that from the tops of the mountains of Syria the sight may discern full thirty leagues (ninety miles). This would carry the eye of Moses much beyond the limits of Palestine. That all the objects which we have enumerated were in the view of Moses is evident, from comparing the position of this hill with respect to surrounding countries; and that the mountains of Seir are visible from those of Abarim is evident from the fact that Stephens on the summit of Mount Hor saw the Dead sea, and that Balaam from this, or from a neighbouring mountain, *looked* on the tribes which dwelt in the neighbourhood of the mountains of Seir, and pronounced their doom.

[1] Zephaniah, ii, 9.

says Buckingham, who was then travelling considerably east of the Dead sea, and nearly on a line with its northern extremity, "I remarked that the surface of the soil was covered with small patches of a yellowish-white substance like powder of brimstone or sulphur—a fact remarked also in the valley of the Jordan, near the head of the Dead sea, and almost in a line with this to the westward at the distance of about thirty miles. The taste and smell of this powder were highly sulphureous; and my guide observed, that the same substance was seen in abundance all around the shores of the Dead sea.[1] Thus has Moab become as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah.

The prophecy revealed the future condition of the *inhabitants* of Moab as well as that of the country; and in this particular the prediction has been not less exactly fulfilled than in others. We find the prophet addressing a call to the inhabitants of Moab to leave the cities and dwell in the rock; and this prophetic call has been obeyed. The once numerous and wealthy cities of Moab have ceased to be inhabited; and in many instances the caves of the mountains form the only dwelling of those who live in the country. Buckingham tells us that the shepherds south of Zsalt, while they fold their flocks amid the ruins, retire themselves to grottos in the rock. These caves are met with in every part of the country, especially in the hills which run along the plain of the Jordan and the Dead sea, and they form a frequent resort of the inhabitants. It could never surely have been anticipated by man, that

[1] Buckingham, 'Arab Tribes,' p. 90.

while flocks should lie down in the cities, the inhabitants should dwell in the rocks; yet so was it prophesied of Moab; and at this day we behold the prophecy fulfilled. *O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth.*[1]

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will send unto him wanderers, that shall cause him to wander, and shall empty his vessels and break their bottles.[2] There is no fixed population in the country; the whole inhabitants are continually on foot, wandering about in search of pasturage, or to avoid the hostile tribes with whom they are at war. They have certain districts of the country which they visit at stated seasons; and sometimes they ascend as high as the Hauran. No term can better describe the habits of such a race, than that which the prophet applies to them, and which travellers, without any intention of quoting the language of prophecy, also employ—wanderer. It comprises the whole history of their life. But why do they not prefer the sure and abundant returns which the cultivation of the soil would yield, to the scanty and precarious subsistence which such a mode of life as this offers? The natives of these countries not unfrequently discover a disposition to settle down as cultivators; and Dr. Bowring tells us that there is a growing desire among the Arabs to pass from the pastoral to the agricultural life. What then prevents them acting on their wishes? Other wanderers have been sent to them, who cause them to wander and who empty their vessels. The tribes of the eastern desert often

[1] Jeremiah, xlviii, 28. [2] Jeremiah, xlviii, 12.

spread themselves over the country like a flood, rob the native encampments of their cattle, and carry off the wheat and corn of the Fellah. When asked why they do not cultivate the earth, they uniformly reply—"Shall we sow for strangers?" "In May the whole of the Hauran is covered with swarms of wanderers from the desert, who remain there till after September. On the arrival of the Aeneze, the resident Arabs who may happen to be at war with them conceal themselves in the neighbourhood of the western mountain."[1] In the country of which we speak, this evil is even more severely felt than in the Hauran. In southern Syria the Turkish government is scarcely known,[2] and there consequently there is nothing to check the incursions of the tribes of the desert. To think of following any other mode of life than the pastoral, in a country continually liable to these very unwelcome visits, would be altogether vain. The days have now come upon Moab, that wanderers are sent to him who cause him to wander, and who empty his vessels and break his bottles.

The miserable and wretched state in which great part of the present inhabitants of this country live, is not less an evidence of the truth of the prophecy. *The glory of Moab shall be contemned, and the remnant shall be very small and feeble.*[3]

When we think of the former magnificence of

[1] Burckhardt, p. 308.

[2] If the closing predictions of Daniel be applied to the Turkish power, they have certainly been fulfilled in a very striking manner with regard to the countries on the east of the Jordan; "but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom and Moab and the chief of the children of Ammon.—Dan. xi, 41.

[3] Isaiah, xvi, 14.

Moab, and how completely it has now passed away—her cities in the dust, her fields uncultivated, and her once numerous and powerful people dwindled to a few wandering shepherds, we may well say—*How is it broken down! how hath Moab turned the back with shame! So shall Moab be a derision and a dismaying to all them about him.* Many of her inhabitants are impoverished and miserable in the extreme. The banks of the Wale are frequented by crowds of Arabs clothed in rags, poor, feeble, and despised. *They are as a wandering bird cast out of the nest.* The picture which Burckhardt gives us of those who live in the neighbourhood of the Dead sea is equally gloomy. Of the plain at the southern extremity of that lake he says—"It is covered with forests, in the midst of which the miserable peasants build their huts of rushes, and cultivate their dhourrah and tobacco fields. At this period (summer) violent intermittent fevers prevail, to which, however, they are so much accustomed, that they labour in the fields during the intervals of the paroxysms of the disease."[1] *We have heard of the pride of Moab, (he is exceeding proud,) his loftiness and his arrogancy, and his pride and the haughtiness of his heart. But now, how is the strong staff broken and the beautiful rod.*[2]

In ancient times this country held an important rank among the nations of Syria, and possessed not a little influence; but now its political power is entirely gone. We can assign no place but the lowest in the scale of nations to a country inhabited only by marauding tribes, whose ideas never extend, and

[1] Burckhardt, p. 391. [2] Jer. xlviii, 17, 29.

whose influence is never felt beyond the deserts in which they live. *The horn of Moab is cut off and his arm is broken, saith the Lord.*[1]

In point of intelligence it is scarcely possible to imagine a more degraded race. On all subjects their ideas are of the most limited kind. Nor is it possible for a native of Europe to listen to their talk but with mingled pity and contempt. Devoid of religion, unless the observance of a few Mohammedan forms can be called such, they are devout believers in the powers of magic. Destitute of truth, honour, and justice, they do not reckon open robbery and plunder as disreputable; nor, in many cases, do they scruple to violate their promise, when they find that they can further their interests by doing so. The only mental occupation in which they can be said ever to engage regards the future, the secrets of which, like all superstitious people, they are very anxious to discover. They frequently employ themselves in calculating when the world shall have an end—a question which they endeavour to determine by the rise or fall in price of certain articles. The Spanish dollar, they affirm, passed in Egypt in the days of Moses for half a piastre; it has now risen to six and a half piastres; and whenever it shall attain the value of twenty piastres, they sagely conclude that the world shall be at an end.[2]

If there be any of the descendants of Moab alive at this day, they are mingled amongst the Arabs who now occupy the country. As a nation they have no existence. *Moab shall be destroyed from being a people.*[3]

[1] Jer. xlviii, 25. [2] Buckingham, 'Arab Tribes,' p. 96.
[3] Jeremiah, xlviii, 42.

All these particulars were foretold regarding Moab; and if the prophecy was minute, the fulfilment has been exact. Which of the ancient cities of this land now remain? The spoiler has come upon every city, and no city has escaped. Here are the ruins of Heshbon and Elealeh. Yonder in the east is the daughter of Dibon sitting in thirst. While in the south Ar has been laid waste, and brought to silence. We look in vain for the harvests of this land. In vain we listen for the shouting of its vintage. The eye falls on uncultivated fields, and the ear receives only the joyless voice of the solitary Arab. Amid the ruins of the cities we find flocks reposing, but whither have the inhabitants gone? They are like the dove which maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth. Hordes of strangers are perpetually wandering over her plains; but in what part of the earth shall we seek for her ancient children? Moab has been destroyed from being a people. And in the utter extinction of this ancient race, and in the ruin of the rich country which they occupied, Jehovah has awfully fulfilled the word which he spake in former days by his servants the prophets.

CHAPTER XIII.

EDOM.

Desolation of its soil—Boundaries of the country—Settlement of Esau in Mount Seir—History of his descendants, the Edomites—Their territory distinguished by salubrity of climate——Soil not infertile—The Edomites the first navigators of the Red sea—The inventors of letters, and the first cultivators of astronomy and the arts—Testimony of ancient history on this head—Opinion of Sir Isaac Newton—Evidence offered by the book of Job to the same fact—Prophecy of the fall of Edom—Geographical structure and general character of the country—Awful desolation of its soil—Testimony of numerous travellers on this head—Analysis of Burckhardt's journey across Edom, embracing a notice of the mountains of Seir, Wady-Araba, and the Western Wilderness—The line of confusion stretched over this country—Its streams pitch and its dust brimstone—The sterility of Edom irreclaimable—The cormorant, the bittern, the raven, &c., found dwelling in it—Examination of the prophecy "None shall pass through it for ever and ever"—Its fulfilment shown—Reflections on the recent discovery of the ruins of Petra.

If it is difficult to define the exact limits of the land of Moab, from the fact that these limits varied at different times, the same circumstance renders it a matter of much greater difficulty to pronounce accurately with regard to the boundaries of Edom. The mountains of Seir formed the original seat of the descendants of Esau, and the position and limits of these mountains it is easy to determine. Speaking generally, they run in a straight line from the southern extremity of the lake of Sodom to the eastern

branch of the Red sea. On the east of them a vast elevated plain spreads itself out, termed Arabia the Stony; on the west and south-west is the wilderness of Sinai. In early times the territory of the Edomites was limited to the range of Seir, but in after ages it was greatly enlarged both on the east and west. When the Jews were carried to Babylon, a colony of Edomites left their mountains and extended the limits of their kingdom on the west to the shores of the Mediterranean, and even seized on part of southern Palestine, making the town of Hebron their capital. When the Greek and Roman writers speak of the kingdom of Idumea,[1] we are to understand that they refer to this tract—the country in the south of Palestine. The eastern Edom of the same times comprised the range of Seir, the high plains on the east of the mountains, and a stripe of territory running up on the east of Moab and Ammon, so as to include the city of Bozrah. This is the Edom of the Scriptures, and the land to which the denunciations of the prophets chiefly refer. In latter times it was known as the country of the Nabatheans—the Edomites who remained in Mount Seir, when the colony departed to enlarge their territory on the west, having become mingled with the people to whom we have referred, and who received their name from Nebajoth, one of the sons of Ishmael.[2]

[1] Edom—changed by the Greeks, for the sake of euphony, into Idumea.

[2] The facts stated above are deducible from the Scripture history, Josephus, and Reland. Diodorus Siculus (lib. xix, c. 104) speaks of the lake Asphaltitis as being placed in the middle of Idumea. "Κεῖται γὰρ κατὰ μέσην τὴν σατραπείαν τῆς Ἰδουμαίας," which was geographically true, provided the Idumea of those

The history of the Edomites is instructive in many respects; but all we can offer here is only the most general outline of it. When Abraham dwelt on the plain of Beersheba, the dark chain of mountains in the south-east was inhabited by a race of people called Horim, from their founder Hor. After the death of his father Isaac, Esau departed for these mountains, and there formed his permanent settlement. For some time the two races lived on amicable terms, and shared the country between them; but in course of time the descendants of Esau, becoming numerous, rose on the original inhabitants, and having extirpated them, obtained sole and entire possession of the country. From that time it was denominated the land of Edom or Esau, although the earlier names of Hor and Seir are not effaced even to this day.

Before the birth of Esau and Jacob it was said, "the elder shall serve the younger," intimating the future inferiority of the descendants of the first-born; but the early and rapid prosperity of the Edomites rendered the fulfilment of the prediction for some time doubtful. Before the posterity of the younger son had grown into a nation or acquired a possession in any country, the posterity of the elder had become a powerful people, and were governed by their own princes. The first form of government established among the Edomites was the patriarchal, hence we

days extended into Palestine on the west, and ran up on the east as we have supposed. Moreover, Jerome informs us that Idumea extended from Eleutheropolis (W.S.W. of Jerusalem) to Aila on the Red sea, which far exceeds the limits assigned to Edom in the Old Testament; and proves the great enlargement of the Idumean territory after its canon was closed.

read of the dukes or emirs who reigned in the land of Edom; their government was in due course changed into a monarchy, and eight kings swayed the sceptre in Edom before any prince reigned over the house of Israel.[1] The feud which arose between the twin brothers in the tent of Isaac was transferred to the mountains of Seir, and when Esau died bequeathed to his posterity. The first ungracious act of which the Edomites were guilty to their brethren the Israelites, was in refusing them permission to pass through their country when on their journey from Egypt; this resolution obliged the tribes to return on their steps through the wilderness, by the Red sea, and enter Canaan on the east. It does not appear that any war arose between the nations of Israel and Edom till the days of David, of whom we read that he put garrisons in Edom; "throughout all Edom put he garrisons; and all they of Edom became David's servants." Then the prophecy was fulfilled, "The elder shall serve the younger." For about one hundred and forty years they continued subject to the yoke of Israel, but their revolt under Jehoram fulfilled the prediction, "It shall come to pass, when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."[2] The kings of Judah made frequent attempts to reduce them again under their dominion; but although they often defeated them in battle, the Edomites appear on the whole to have maintained their national independence. The siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar offered them an opportunity which they

[1] Genesis, xxxvi, 31—39; 2 Samuel, viii, 14; Genesis, xxv, 23.
[2] Genesis, xxvii, 40.

eagerly embraced of avenging themselves on the Jews for many defeats, and of gratifying an enmity which they had cherished from ancient days; nor did the captives in Babylon forget that the miseries of the siege had been materially increased by the bitter malice of the Edomites: "Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof."[1] The decline of the Jewish state was marked by the rise of mightier kingdoms, whose authority the Edomites could not so easily decline; but under the rule of the Greeks and Romans they appear to have attained a degree of prosperity which they had not enjoyed in any previous period of their history. The commerce of India and Arabia now began to flow through their country, and this did more to aggrandise their nation than all the previous conquests of their arms. At the period referred to, the territory of the Edomites was divided into the two branches we have already specified, the kingdom of Idumea on the west and that of the Nabatheans on the east; to the latter belonged the mountains of Seir, the original seat of the Edomites. In the midst of these mountains stood Petra, the capital of the nation, and the centre of the greatest traffic then carried on in the world.

From the earliest times the territory of Edom appears to have been distinguished rather for its variety and salubrity of climate than for any great fertility of soil; over the plains in the west nature has spread a covering of barren sands; to those on the east she has been more bounteous, still it required all the skill

[1] Psalm cxxxvii, 7.

and industry of the inhabitants to raise adequate crops on a somewhat ungrateful soil. The best part of the country decidedly was the mountains of Seir; there the dews were abundant, and are so to this day; the air is salubrious and bracing; the heats of summer are tempered by the mountain breezes; the colds of winter are often very intense, and diseases are little known.[1] The waters and the warm sun, acting on the fine mould of the valleys, and the mountain terraces, covered them with the most luxuriant vegetation; and among the mountains of Edom, as among those of Palestine, the fruits of Europe grew up in profusion with those of warmer climates. Even at this day the eye of the traveller is often surprised and delighted with some valley of surpassing green which bursts suddenly upon him as he journeys amid the mountain passes of that land, although no doubt the effect is heightened by the boundless wastes around, and the desolate mountain piles which tower above him. "I remember," says Stephens, "that the mountains were barren, solitary, and desolate; and that, as we ascended, their aspect became more wild and rugged, and rose to grandeur and sublimity. I remember, too, that among these arid wastes of crumbling rock there were beautiful streams gushing out from the sides of the mountains; and sometimes small valleys, where the green grass, and shrubs, and bushes were putting forth in early spring; and that, altogether, I saw among the stony mountains of Arabia Petræa more verdure than I had observed

[1] Strabo speaks of the territory of the Nabatheans as populous and abounding in pastures: "Εἶτ' Ἐλαν[illegible] πόλεως, καὶ ἡ Ναβαταίη, πολύανδρος οὖσα ἡ χώρα καὶ εὔοστος."—Tom. ii, p. 1103, Oxford Edition. 1807.

since I left the banks of the Nile." [1] The blessing which Isaac poured over the head of Esau appears on the whole to have been adequately realized: "Behold thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above." [2] Nor were his posterity to be entirely dependent upon the produce of the soil, for the patriarch immediately adds, "and by thy sword shalt thou live." The boisterous and daring spirit of Esau lived in his descendants; and ultimately they acquired by conquest possession of richer lands than any included in the limits of Edom proper. The words of Moses, when he sent to the king of Edom to crave permission for Israel to pass through his country on their way to Canaan, imply that Edom, at that early period, was covered with vineyards, intersected with highways, and possessed numerous springs, which would add greatly to its beauty and fertility: "Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country; we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells; we will go by the king's highway, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left until we have passed thy borders." [3] In ages long posterior, the palm-trees of Idumæa were celebrated by the poets of Rome.

But Edom enjoyed a higher distinction than any which arose from her rich trade, or her well cultivated soil; she was the first land on earth in which the arts and sciences were studied; and to this country others are indebted for their knowledge of them. Laborde calls Edom the cradle of the world; this

[1] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 55. [2] Genesis, xxvii, 39.
[3] Numbers, xx, 17.

honour has commonly been shared between Egypt and Chaldea, but it would seem to belong more properly to Edom; and several proofs are in existence both in sacred and profane writers which certainly countenance, if they do not establish, her claim to this distinction.

It is generally admitted by those who are in any degree acquainted with the subject that the Red sea was the most ancient on which commerce was carried on. This we might have inferred, although history had not made us acquainted with the fact. The usually calm state of its surface, the numerous islets with which it is sprinkled, and the short distance between its opposite shores, would recommend it to the unskilful mariner of early times as the most favourable on which he could launch his frail bark, and make his first efforts in navigation. The bearings of the coast or of the islands directed him by day; at night he was guided by the stars. As his skill increased his voyages became longer; he coasted along Arabia Felix, and entered the Persian gulf; or taking a westward course, he visited Ethiopia and Egypt, where at all times he found a ready market for the gums and spices of Arabia.

Pliny and Strabo unite in saying that king Erythra, meaning Esau, the chief of Edom, both terms signifying red, reigned in these parts, and was the inventor of the *rates* or vessels used in the navigation of this sea;[1] and the latter informs us that the tomb of this king was still shown on an island near the Persian gulf, marked by a high mound, with

[1] Pliny, lib. vi, cap. 23, 28. "Strabonis Rerum Geographicarum," tom. ii, p. 1106.

palm-trees planted round it.[1] There can be no doubt that the Edomites navigated this sea from the days of their progenitor, Esau, who was thus, it seems, the real father of mariners. But the Edomites could not build vessels without studying the art of the carpenter, nor navigate them without observing the stars, nor keep regular accounts of their merchandise without inventing and using letters; and therefore with the trade of the Red sea grew up the art of ship-building, the science of astronomy, and the use of letters. The early traditions of several nations ascribe their knowledge of letters and of the arts to this source, namely, the merchants of the Red sea. Thus we read of Oes, who appeared in that sea with the tail of a fish, (such was the symbol employed to represent a mariner,) and taught astronomy and letters. We read of another person, Euhadnes by name, who also came out of the sea, and was the first who taught astronomy in Chaldea. Oannes, it is said, taught the Chaldeans letters, mathematics, arts, agriculture, and architecture. It is probable that these several names belonged to one and the same individual, and that this person was one of the merchant-mariners of the Red sea, who had either visited Chaldea in the way of his trade, or had been induced to settle permanently in that country.

The common account given of the introduction of letters into Europe leads us to infer that the languages of the Western world, at least the characters which we employ in writing them, are derived from the Edomites. Cadmus, by whom letters were first

[1] Strabo. tom. ii, p. 1090. Ἐν ᾗ τάφος Εὐθρᾶ δείκνυται χῶμα μέγα, ἀγρίοις φοίνιξι κατάφυτον.

brought into Europe, was a Phœnician; and it has been shown, on satisfactory grounds, that the Phœnicians were a colony from the Red sea,[1] in other words, were Edomites. And not the languages of Europe only, but even those of western Asia appear to have been derived from the same stock; for it is agreed among eminent philologists that as the languages of the west are evidently derived from those of the east, so the languages of the east may be ultimately resolved into the Hebrew or Phœnician. Considerations of this kind appear to have satisfied the mind of Newton regarding the early superiority of this people in letters and science: "It seems, therefore," says he, "that letters and astronomy and the trade of carpenters were invented by the merchants of the Red sea, and that they were propagated from Arabia Petræa into Egypt, Chaldea, Syria, Asia Minor, and Europe, much about one and the same time."[2] This conclusion receives a singular corroboration from the book of Job. It is generally agreed that the residence of Job was in the land of Edom; the book which records his trials is scarcely more wonderful in itself than is the state of society which it discloses, especially when we take into account the early age to which it refers; we are surprised to

[1] We find Strabo speculating on the origin of the term, "Red," as applied to this sea: "Ερυθρὰν γὰρ λέγειν τινὰς τὴν θαλατταν ἀπὸ της χροιᾶς της ἰμφαινομένης κατ' ἀνάκλασιν, εἴτε ἀπὸ του ἡλίου κατα κορυφὴν ὄντος ἴσως ἀπο των ὀρων ἐρυθραινομένων ἐκ της ἀποκαυσεως."—Tom. ii, p. 1106. A more simple and satisfactory explanation, than that this sea owed its name to the ruddy colour of its waters, caused by the rays of the sun, or the reflection of the surrounding mountains, is the one commonly given, that it was so called after Esau or Edom, which signifies red.

[2] Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms, p. 207. Dublin Edition, 1728.

find in how few particulars the picture of society which is here exhibited differs from that of our own age and country. Men had been collected into cities, and while some lived by the cultivation of the soil, others gained their livelihood by the exercise of mechanical arts. We find in this land, at the period when the patriarch lived, that gradation of rank and those extremes of affluence and poverty which can exist only in a country which has been long settled and considerably civilized. Justice was regularly administered, war was reduced to system, trade was carried on by sea and land, architecture had made considerable progress, the constellations had been named, their rising and setting accurately observed, and time thence computed.[1] Great difference of opinion we know exists as to the time when the patriarch lived, some placing him so early as the days of Abraham, and others in a much later age; but provided the era of Job be fixed at any period prior to the reign of David or Solomon,[2] the book which bears his name remains unaffected as a proof of the early and great superiority of the people amongst whom he lived, in letters, arts, and science, to the other nations of the world.

Such was the early glory of this land: Edom was the cradle of the sciences and the centre of the trade of the world; and as her greatness was of ancient days, so she possessed many securities that it would be permanent; and that she would continue

[1] See Note F.

[2] We conceive that the patriarchal character of this book will be made best to harmonise with the advanced state of the arts in the times to which it refers, by placing Job in the third or fourth generation from Esau.

to maintain the superiority which she had achieved over the nations. The nearest line from India to the Mediterranean lay directly through Edom, and therefore it must have appeared to her inhabitants highly probable, indeed, almost certain, that her trade would continue so long as the treasures of the east continued to be carried into the western world. That trade is still in existence; but Edom has no share in it. She, at whose feet the tribes of the desert laid the riches of India and Arabia, and who sent her mariners forth with them to the shores of Egypt and the coasts of the Mediterranean, is now naked and in want of all things. The inhabitants of the same land, who were skilled in ancient times to draw forth the ore from the bowels of the mountain, and mould it into the instrument of music, or forge it into the terrible weapon by which the earth is subdued, have now degenerated into savage and ignorant hordes. But who could have foreseen so dire a reverse? Who that contemplated the broad and strong foundation on which her greatness rested, could have augured its total overthrow? After the prophets disclosed her ruin, Edom enlarged the basis of her power, and a new and still more auspicious era opened on her commerce;[1] although an impostor could have foreseen it, he would not at that hour have had the boldness to predict the darkness of the coming night; he would have pourtrayed the

[1] After her calamities were foretold Edom enjoyed a period of greater prosperity than ever, succeeded however by a night of disasters; this appears to be the meaning of the prophet in Isa. xxi, 11, 12, "The burden of Dumah (Idumea). He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night."

future in the most glowing terms, and would have set no bounds to the height of grandeur and power which Edom was yet to attain. But how differently did the prophets of Israel speak. We find them careless alike whether present appearances might not cast great doubt over their revelations, and even seem to render their fulfilment impossible; or whether their predictions might not wound the vanity and pride of those against whom they were directed; they appear intent only on the faithful discharge of their great office, and in doing so they foretold concerning the land of Edom the most terrible woes which ever were denounced against any region of the earth. They looked on the exuberant fertility of her fields, and in the name of Heaven cried against them thus, "I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and make thee most desolate. When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate." They surveyed her opulent towns, and thus foretold their ruin: "All the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes." They foretold that a day should come when the streams of her commerce would be dried up, and when the caravans which departed and returned, bringing to Edom the rich treasures of a foreign land, should return no more: "I will cut off from it him that passeth out, and him that returneth." They foretold a day when her people, renowned in war, skilful in the arts, and emulous likewise of the fame of wisdom, should perish from the earth: "Edom shall be cut off for ever." In fine, turning to her capital, the voice of denunciation rolled along the cliffs where she had built her mountain throne, and whence she looked proudly forth upon the nations and defied

their power: "Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, oh thou that dwellest in the rock: though thou shouldst make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord." All these various particulars the prophets foretold regarding this land; and time, the great evolver of truth and the great exposer of falsehood, has set the seal of verity upon every one of them. But we shall quote the prophecy itself.

"My sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold, it shall come down upon Idumæa, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day: the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it; and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be a habitation for dragons, and a court for owls."[1] "For I have sworn by myself, saith the Lord, that Bozrah shall be a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes. Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height

[1] Isaiah, xxxiv, 5—13.

of the hill: though thou shouldst make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord." "Concerning Edom, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished? For, lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men. Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gommorrah, and the neighbouring cities thereof, saith the Lord, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it." [1] "The house of Jacob shall possess their possessions; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau. Thou shalt be cut off for ever." [2]

We have already described incidentally the general structure of the country of the Edomites; its arangement and character are exceedingly simple: two parallel chains of hills intersect it from north to south, extending from the extremity of the Dead sea to the Elanitic branch of the Red sea. These are the Mount Seir of Scripture; and are known at this day among the Arabs by the slightly altered name of Mount Shera. They are lofty, broken, and rugged; and, if one may judge from the frequent application which travellers make of the term "black" to them, they have a peculiarly dark aspect, which adds to their air of desolate grandeur. It is to the eastern,

[1] Jeremiah, xlix, 7—18.

[2] Obadiah, x, 17, 18. We view these prophecies as referring not to the Idumea of the Greeks and Romans, which lay chiefly on the west of the Jordan, but to Mount Seir, the ancient Edom, with the plains on the E. and S.W.

which is by much the loftiest of these chains, that the scriptural name of Seir belongs. Those who judge from their present desolate character, will form a very erroneous opinion of their ancient fertility; in scriptural times the terrace was doubtless employed in their cultivation, and this, aided by abundant dews and numerous springs, would give to the mountains of Esau a very different appearance from that which they now possess. Then there was nothing to prevent their being sown with grain, planted with olives, or covered with vineyards. These parallel chains enclose the broad valley to which we have had frequent occasion to refer, El Araba, through which, according to an hypothesis which we have shown to be untenable, the Jordan flowed before the destruction of Sodom. It is just possible that, in the earliest times, the soil of this valley was capable of being cultivated; at this day it is wholly covered with sand, if we except the margin of the winter torrents which flow here. The mountains which bound it on the west are composed of chalk and limestone; they are regular in form, their summits are table-shaped, and scarcely rise above the level of the adjoining desert of Tih. Of the eastern chain we must not conceive as a single line of hills; on the contrary, it is a belt of mountains of from thirty to thirty-six miles in width. It is composed chiefly of granite, and its summits, which rise to a great height, are fractured into the most fanciful forms. Laborde informs us that, for the space of thirty miles from Akaba northwards, the mountains are of granite; for the next fifteen miles they are covered with chalk and limestone, which give place in their turn to rocks of sandstone, veined with oxide

of iron, and presenting to the eye a more fantastic shape than is seen in any other part of the chain.[1] On either side of these mountain ranges are vast deserts which stretch out beyond the eye. That on the west has existed in its present condition from time immemorial, being the great wilderness in which the children of Israel journeyed for forty years; from which circumstance it has received its name, and is known among the Arabs to this day as Et-Tih, or the Desert of wandering.[2] On the farthest edge of this desert is the vast granite range of Sinai and Horeb; and to a spectator on the mountains of Shera, these venerable and awful piles may be seen at a great distance in the south-west elevating themselves above the intervening ocean of sand. The plain on the east of the mountains of Shera has a very high elevation, so as to diminish materially the height of these mountains when viewed from this side; it is at present a desert, but the numerous ruined towns and villages with which it is covered, and the heaps of stones which obviously once formed the boundaries of fields, show that this unfriendly soil was once industriously culitvated and thickly peopled.[3] Dry walls, the remains of the ancient terraces, are seen on the acclivities in this quarter; and on the summit of the heights are the ruins of the towers,

[1] Laborde, p. 262.

[2] The testimony of Strabo confirms the account we have given of the original character of the plains east and west of the mountains of Seir. He speaks of the territory as stony, as having few palms, yet producing thorns and myrrh, (very probably the talh or acacia,) and possessing fountains springing out of the earth: ' Μετὰ δὲ τούτους διάμμός ἐστι γῆ καὶ λυπρὰ φοίνικας ἔχουσα ὀλίγους, καὶ ἄκανθαν καὶ μυρίκον καὶ ὄρυκτα ὕδατα."—Tom. ii, p. 1092.

[3] Burckhardt, pp. 435, 436; Laborde, p. 263.

constructed for watching in harvest and vintage time. The whole eastern neighbourhood of Petra is covered with these traces of former industry.[1] Such is the structure of the land of Edom, and such at this day is its general character and appearance.

In illustrating the predictions concerning this country, the first circumstance to which we shall advert is the desolation of its soil; this forms a prominent part of the prophecy; it is repeatedly introduced, and always in the strongest and most pointed terms: "Son of man, set thy face against mount Seir, and prophesy against it, and say unto it, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O mount Seir, I am against thee, and I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate.[2] Also, Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof.[3] Thou shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it; and they shall know that I am the Lord." It thus appears that it was no ordinary doom which was denounced against this land: it was to be made *most desolate*, or as it is in the Hebrew text, *the desolation of desolations.* It was to be pre-eminent in this respect amongst the other countries which were also to be laid desolate, and Edom now enjoys the pre-eminence which the prophet assigned it. The curse pronounced on Judea has in very truth been inflicted; yet, there, there are numerous spots of surpassing fertility and beauty; the plains of Ammon and Moab are covered with a fine herbage; but there is neither verdure nor palm-trees to relieve the nakedness of Edom.

[1] Irby and Mangles, p. 402. [2] Ezekiel, xxxv, 2, 3.
[3] Jeremiah, xlix, 17.

One part of the country is a boundless expanse of sand, the other is made up of a chain of naked and towering rocks. *Thou shalt be desolate, O mount Scir, and all Idumea, even all of it.*

The question here is not, where shall we find proofs of the desolation of Edom? These proofs are so numerous that the difficulty lies in making a proper selection. "Here," says Dr. Shaw, "is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or pomegranates, but the whole is an evil place, a lonesome, desolate wilderness."[1] *Edom*, said the prophet, *shall be a desolate wilderness.*[2] The scenery of Edom, in many places, is of the most sublime description; the very vastness of its desolation overpowers the mind of the traveller and fills it with awe. "As we advanced down the ravine," say Irby and Mangles in their approach to Petra, "a wild and romantic view opened to us, terminated by the peaks of the black and rugged ridge of mount Hor, the same that is alluded to in Scripture, and by a boundless extent of desert view, which we have hardly ever seen equalled for singularity and grandeur.....The dark ridge of mount Hor, which appears to be altogether composed of a sort of sparry flint, broken into masses and seamed with wide crevices, with scarcely any verdure to vary its deep purple colour, forms the boundary of this hollow to the southward, and also to the westward, with that high peak, upon which is the reputed tomb of Aaron, rearing itself above all the rest in the middle of the picture. This craggy ridge does not, however terminate the landscape; the mountain from which we viewed it being considerably higher, and commanding

[1] Shaw, p. 438. [2] Joel, iii, 19.

a boundless view beyond it, over a whitish expanse of country, which is varied here and there with other coloured ridges rising like islands upon it, or jutting forward into it like promontories."[1] *Thus will I make mount Seir most desolate.* Similar is the testimony of Stephens, given as he was advancing up the valley of Araba, which he describes as varying from four to eight miles in breadth, and having on each side, high, dark, and barren mountains, bounding it like a wall. "The land of Idumea lay before me in barrenness and desolation; no trees grew in the valley, and no verdure on the mountain-tops. All was bare, dreary, and desolate.....The next day the general features of the scene were the same, eternal barrenness and desolation; and, moving to the right, at one o'clock we were at the foot of the mountains of Seir; and towering above all the rest, surmounted by a circular dome, like the tombs of the shiekhs in Egypt, was the bare and rugged summit of mount Hor, the burial place of Aaron, visible in every direction at a great distance from below, and on both sides the great range of mountains, and forming one of the marks by which the Bedouin regulates his wanderings in the desert."[2] *If grape-gatherers come to thee, would they not leave some gleaning-grapes? if thieves by night, they will destroy till they have enough. But I have made Esau* BARE.[3] One after another has drawn the picture of this country: but every hand which has attempted the task has only reproduced another likeness of that which the prophets exhibited when Edom was a fertile country, and the Edomites

[1] Irby and Mangles, pp. 386, 387.
[2] Stephens, vol. ii, pp. 41, 51.
[3] Jeremiah, xlix, 9, 10.

a powerful people. To the testimonies we have already adduced we shall only add that of lord Lindsay: the traveller had left Petra, and was proceeding across the country in a north-west direction to Hebron." "We entered the low barren ridges that skirt wady Araba on the west, and, for several hours during this and the following day, traversed a country of the most utter desolation, hills succeeding hills, without the slightest picturesque beauty, covered with loose flints, sand, and gravel; sterility in its most repulsive garb;—it made the very heart ache, and the spirits sink—and such is Edom now."[1] *Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof.*[2]

But instead of multiplying extracts from various authorities, we shall offer a brief analysis of Burckhardt's journey, the first ever made by a European in modern times, from a point about eighteen miles south of the ancient town of Teman on the eastern plain, through the mountains of Shera, to the "great and terrible wilderness" on the west: this will allow us to add, to the account we have already given, several particulars illustrative of the general character of the country; and will serve to show how completely the predicted desolation has been inflicted not on particular spots, but on the country generally.

Leaving the encampment, our traveller, taking a W.S.W. direction, crossed extensive sandy plains, and arrived at the eastern base of the mountains of

[1] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 45. [2] Jeremiah, xlix, 17.

Shera; having crossed the first range of these mountains, he descended at the end of five hours, into a fertile valley containing a spring. Here were a few huts belonging to the Howeytat tribe of Arabs, and around them a few fields sown with dhourra. From this spring he continued his descent along the course of a winter torrent, amid barren mountains, the calcareous rock predominating, with some flint. At the end of seven hours he began to ascend a steep mountain, and in two hours and a half reached the highest summit of the mountains of Seir: he found here a chalky surface. The descent on the western side leads down a mountain entirely destitute of vegetation, and composed of calcareous rocks, sand-stone, and flint lying over each other in horizontal layers: the road lies along the edge of almost perpendicular precipices, and is obstructed by large rocks which have rolled down from the upper part of the mountain. In three hours after leaving the summit, he came to a number of tombs on the road side,—the spot where the Arabs who encamp amidst these mountains bury their dead: in half an hour more he reached the bottom of the mountain, and entered the bed of a winter torrent, which had worked its passage through a chain of sandstone rocks,—a continuation of those amid which Petra is situated. The narrow bed is enclosed by perpendicular cliffs, not more than fifteen or twenty yards apart: in this narrow pass the traveller continued for an hour and a half, when the cliffs on either hand retired, and the bottom of the defile opened out into a pretty extensive sandy plain, interspersed with rocks. A few plants of the Talh tree

grow amid the sands of this little valley; "but their withered leaves," says Burckhardt, "cannot divert the traveller's eye from the dreary scene around him." This plain is three miles long; beyond it the rocks approach, and the valley narrows: On the road side, the eye of the traveller again discovers graves of the Bedouins: here these children of the desert sleep, and their simple resting places give a peculiarly solemn aspect to the wild scenery of the mountains. This narrow wady leads the traveller out upon the great valley of Araba; a few hundred paces above the issue of the valley is a green spot, with a few wells, Ayoun Gharendel; the water which is shaded by a few date trees, has a sulphureous taste, but being the only spring on the borders of the great plain, within a day's journey north or south, it is a halting place of the Bedouins.

Our traveller is now at the western base of the mountains; behind him the dark and lofty chain of Seir, the most conspicuous summit of which is crowned with the tomb of the high priest of Israel;[1] before him the noble valley of Araba. It is indeed a beautiful theory which supposes that in early times the Jordan rolled through this valley, and poured the snows of Hermon into the beautiful gulph of Ailah, gladdening as it passed the land of Edom and the mountains of Seir. The imagination delights to picture the rich scenery of this now desolate plain:

[1] It appears to have been, in part at least, for the purpose of rebuking the superstitious wish which is at this day, and has been for many ages universally felt by the Jews, of being buried in Palestine, that the two most eminent persons in their history were interred beyond the limits of the Land of Promise—Aaron on mount Hor and Moses in a valley in the land of Moab.

—the noble river which enlivened the centre, the palms which skirted it, the gardens and oliveyards and pasture-grounds which occupied the space between the margin of the stream and the mountain's base; while the mighty Seir, whose steep declivities were mantled with the vine, sent forth a hundred rivulets to refresh the gardens, and augment the stream which rolled at his feet. Almost all travellers, in their progress along this plain, have amused their fancy with some such reflections as these; and one regrets not a little that they are compelled to regard them only as a picture.

But although recently discovered facts render it impossible to believe that this valley ever was the bed of the Jordan, it is not wanting in interest in other respects. It has been the theatre of mighty events. When the Israelites journeyed from Egypt to the land of Promise, it was the frequent scene of their encampments, and some of the most memorable events of the "forty years" took place in this valley. Here the camp of Israel appears to have been pitched, when the spies were sent to search the land; and here on their return with the evil tidings the famous rebellion broke out, which provoked God to swear regarding that generation that they should not enter into his rest. When the forty years were drawing to a close, and the men of war had been wasted out from the camp, the tribes returned to this valley, and having ascended it as far as the Ghoeyr,[1] the main defile which led through the ter-

[1] This broad valley divides the mountains of Djebal from those of Shera—the latter beginning on the south of it, and being properly the mountains of the Edomites. This valley is upwards of

ritory of the Edomites, they opened their negociation with the king of Edom, but failed to obtain permission to pass through the country. They next passed down the plain, to "compass the land of Edom," "through the way of the plain from Elath and from Eziongeber," (the name by which this valley is known in Scripture,) the hearts of the people fainting "because of the way." Having crossed the range of Seir, at a sinking in the mountains below the head of the Elantic branch of the Red sea, they ascended by the way of the wilderness of Moab, and entered Judea on the east. At a more recent period it became the great thoroughfare of the trade which Solomon carried on with Ophir, being the nearest route from Jerusalem to Eziongeber on the Red sea, where the fleets of Tarshish were stationed. Thus few places have been the scene of more varied or memorable events. At one time we find its bosom covered with the encampments of a great nation, and the scene of divine manifestations and mighty miracles: at another, we behold it the channel of the rich traffice of the king of Israel; and now it is swept by the simoom, and visited only by hordes of Bedouins, who wander unmoved over sands which once reflected the glow of the fiery pillar, or were cooled by the shadow of the cloud.

Of the present appearance of this celebrated plain, which is about five miles in breadth where he crossed it, Burckhardt has given the following description:—"Near Gharendel, where I saw it, the

twelve miles across at its eastern extremity; but it narrows towards the west. It is famous for its excellent pastures.—Burckardt, p. 410.

whole plain presented to the view an expanse of shifting sands, whose surface was broken by innumerable undulations and low hills. The sand appears to have been brought from the shores of the Red sea by the southerly winds; and the Arabs told me that the valley continued to present the same appearance beyond the latitude of Wady Mousa. A few talh trees, (the acacia which produces the gum arabic), tamarisk, and rethem, grow among the sand hills; but the depth of sand precludes all vegetation of herbage. Numerous Bedouin tribes encamp here in the winter, when the torrents produce a copious supply of water, and a few shrubs spring up upon their banks, affording pasturage to the sheep and goats; but the camels prefer the leaves of the trees, especially the thorny talh."

Having crossed the valley of Araba, the traveller ascended the hills which bound it on the west. These are far inferior in height to the eastern range, but are marked by the same characters of desolation, and intersected by broad wadys, in which the talh tree grows: the rock is silicious. A gentle ascent of an hour and a half enabled him to reach their summit, from which he descended by a very gradual declivity into the western plain. The level of this plain is higher than that of Araba, but it is about a thousand feet lower than the Eastern Desert. The eye of the traveller now stretched away into the great wilderness in which the Israelites wandered for forty years. Its entire surface was covered with sand and flints; and the view is bounded only by the horizon." [1] Such is a faithful

[1] Burckhardt, pp. 39—445.

analysis of Burckhardt's journey across the country. It offers pregnant evidence of the fulfilment of the prophecy—*I will make thee most desolate, the desolation of desolations.*

It was foretold that the *line of confusion* should be extended over this land. Not only are her towns destroyed, and so completely destroyed, that it may be said of them their very ruins are perished; but all the enclosures of her fields are obliterated, and scarcely a vestige remains of her ancient highways—all order and distinction are gone—the landmarks of law as well as of property are removed. Edom is a scene of social as well as physical disorder. There is no government in the country, and the stronger tribes prey upon the weaker. Almost the entire surface of the soil is covered with flints. This is true of those parts which are still capable of being cultivated, as well as of those which are irreclaimably barren. "We had now before us," says Burckhardt, speaking of the western parts of Idumea, "an immense expanse of dreary country, entirely covered with black flints."[1] *He shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness.*[2]

"The streams thereof," said the prophet, "shall be turned into pitch and the dust thereof into brimstone."[3] The soil of Edom is strongly impregnated with sulphur or brimstone. The evidence of this is found in the highly sulphureous quality of the water of many of the springs and rivers. On the plains in the north-east dark volcanic mounts are

[1] Burckhardt, p. 445. [2] Isaiah, xxxiv, 11.
[3] Isaiah, xxxiv, 9.

very numerous. Some of them are covered with scoriæ of a reddish colour; the lava which has streamed from them forms islands in the sandy plain;[1] patches of soil strewn with sulphur, roads paved with lava, and hot sulphureous springs, not only testify that many parts of the country have undergone a destruction by fire, but that these fires are still at work below the surface. Thus literally have the streams of that land been turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone. But there is, we conceive, a mixture of figure in the prophecy, and the remaining part we apprehend alludes to the eternal drought of her plains, which no rain was ever to quench. "Neither is this country ever, unless sometimes at the equinoxes, refreshed with rain; but the few hardy vegetables which it produces are stunted by a perpetual drought, and the nourishment which the dews contribute to them in the night is sufficiently impaired by the powerful heat of the sun in the day."[2] *The land thereof shall become burning pitch; it shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever.*[3]

There is one important particular in which the predicted desolation of Edom differs from that of the neighbouring countries. Judea, Ammon, and Moab have been assured by the prophets that in due time they shall revive from their ruin; but of Edom it was said—*I will make thee* PERPETUAL *desolations.* The inherent fertility of the former countries is in most places untouched. Nothing would be easier than to awaken the dormant powers of their soil;

[1] Irby and Mangles, p. 377. [2] Shaw, p. 438.
[3] Isaiah, xxxiv, 10.

and it is surely fitted to strengthen our confidence in the fulfilment of the prophecies, that at this day we perceive no physical obstacle in the way of the return of these countries to their former flourishing condition. But it is otherwise with Edom. The soil of this country is now buried under a great depth of sand, which the winds have brought up upon it from the wilderness of Sinai and the shores of the Red sea. Some portions on the north-eastern plain might be cultivated; but with regard to the country generally, its fertility could not be restored without a miracle. *From generation to generation it shall lie waste.*[1] The lands on either side of the Jordan shall again bloom as in their early spring; but desolation has fixed her seat, and shall continue to dwell to all ages amid the dark mountains and the eternal sands of Edom. *Thus saith the Lord God, when the whole earth rejoiceth I will make thee desolate.*[2]

With regard to the animals which were to be found in Edom in after ages, the predictions of the prophets were remarkably full and precise. Each several prediction has not been verified owing to two reasons. Travellers occupied with the desolate scenery and the singular ruins of this country, have not attended to its animals; and in some instances there is a doubt regarding the species denoted in the Hebrew text; but notwithstanding the main particulars of the prophecy have been satisfactorily established. We shall just announce in so many sentences the several predictions, of the fulfilment of which travellers have furnished evidence.[3]

[1] Isaiah, xxxiv, 10. [2] Ezekiel, xxxv, 14.

[3] Dr. Keith has given a very full and beautiful illustration of this part of the subject. We refer the reader to it.

The cormorant and the bittern shall possess it.[1] The original word which our translators have rendered cormorant is *kaath.* Now, waiving the question whether the partridge or the pelican or some other bird be here denoted, the following fact will satisfy us that the prophecy has been fulfilled. A bird is found at this day in Edom, to which the Arabs give the same name with the prophet, only slightly altered to *katta.* There can be no doubt that this is the species to which Isaiah refers. It resembles the English partridge, and is found here in vast numbers. Lindsay says that their incessant cries amid the rocks around Petra were delightful to a sportsman's ear. Stephens saw them running up the sides of the mountains of Seir; and scarcely had Burckhardt crossed the Ahsa, the northern boundary of Edom, than he mentions this bird; and to give us some idea of the immense numbers in which it is found, says that the Arab boys often kill two or three at a time, merely by throwing a stick amongst them.[2] With regard, then, to the bird first named in the prophecy there can be no doubt; but of the *bittern,* which the prophet joins with the *kaath* in the possession of Edom, travellers have communicated no information.

The raven shall dwell in it.[3] "The fields of Tafyle," (in the northern part of Edom) says the traveller last cited, "are frequented by immense numbers of crows."[4] *The owl shall dwell in it; the screech-owl also shall rest there and find for herself a*

[1] Isaiah, xxxiv, 11.
[2] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 31; Stephens, vol. ii, p. 52; Burckhardt, p. 406. [3] Isaiah, xxxiv, 11. [4] Burckhardt, p. 405.

place of rest.[1] On the testimony of every traveller, the ruins of Petra are haunted by owls; there they bring forth; and amid the doleful sounds with which they fill the valley at night, the ear of the traveller is particularly assailed by the hootings of the screech-owl. *There shall the vultures also be gathered.*[2] In his approach to Petra we find Lindsay saying, "Vultures and hawks soared above us."[3] *The satyr shall cry to his fellow.*[4] The word rendered *satyr* means *a rough hairy one,* and the best commentators are of opinion that the goat is the animal meant. Now the mountain-goat is found in numerous herds in the north of Edom. They are met with in all the valleys south of the Arnon, and especially in that of the Ahsa. They pasture in flocks of from forty to fifty.[5] Their flesh is esteemed by the people of Kerek, who often kill and eat them; and as the animal is shy and not easily approached, the hunters are obliged to conceal themselves among the reeds which border the streams to which at evening they come to drink. *It shall be a habitation of dragons.*[6] The prophet means serpents. These creatures are found equally among the ruins of the ancient towns and on the sands of the open desert. Volney, who passed on the west of Edom, was told by the Arabs that the ruins of this country are haunted by scorpions, and on that account avoided by the Bedouins.[7] Shaw speaks of vipers and lizards as abounding in the wilderness of Edom to such a degree, as to entitle it to be called the inhe-

[1] Isaiah, xxxiv, 14.
[2] Isaiah, xxxiv, 15.
[3] Lindsay, vol. ii, p. 31.
[4] Isaiah, xxxiv, 14.
[5] Burckhardt, p. 405.
[6] Isaiah, xxxiv, 13.
[7] Volney, vol. ii, p. 225.

ritance of dragons.[1] And Laborde, in getting up in the morning, often found these creatures below the mat on which he had been sleeping. Thus, in righteous judgment has the dwelling of the haters of the chosen people been converted into a *habitation for dragons.*

None shall pass through it for ever and ever.[2] This prophecy has been understood in its most literal and absolute sense as affirming that in all time to come no one should ever be able to pass through this land;[3] but even those who adopt this interpretation must necessarily admit that it is subject to certain limitations. When taken in its most literal sense, it can be viewed only as referring to strangers, and not to the natives of the desert, who have been in the habit from time immemorial of traversing the

[1] Shaw, pp. 448, 449. [2] Isaiah, xxxiv, 10.

[3] Such is the meaning in which it has been taken by Dr. Keith, who has employed, in support of this sense of the prophecy, some rather singular arguments, which, however, he has abandoned in the later editions of his excellent work. Our reasons for dissenting from this interpretation are given above. It is quite consistent with the verbal theory of inspiration to say that the Old Testament is a thoroughly oriental book; its orientalism was well understood by the people to whom it was first given, and ample means are now afforded to the nations of the west for understanding this part of its character. When Jeremiah characterises the desert in which the Israelites wandered as "a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt," it is obvious that he can only mean that these deserts were far from being a frequented route; for they were then, as they still are, sometimes crossed, and the resort of several tribes. We could never understand why it should be said of Burckhardt that he did not pass through Edom—he crossed it from east to west, although not exactly through the centre of the country. Laborde also passed through it. Neither Lindsay nor Stephens passed through the *ancient Edom*, although it was so said at the time. They ascended Araba, penetrated Seir to Petra, and then crossed to Hebron; but no one doubts that this journey could now be accomplished at almost no personal risk, and without a great deal of inconvenience or expence.

country; but even in this limited sense the interpretation, we conceive, is very unsafe, and not quite tenable consistently with events which have already taken place. We grant that for many ages Edom remained unvisited; her sands were trodden only by the foot of the Bedouin, and the eye of the stranger never beheld the illustrious monuments which her dark mountains conceal. The gates of the country, though standing wide open, appeared to be as completely barred against the natives of other lands, as if the same sword which guarded of old the doors of Eden had flamed before the mountain passes of Seir. But now these gates have been entered, the country has been explored and traversed in every direction, and even the veil of Wady Mousa has been lifted up, and the monuments of that mysterious valley revealed to the eyes of Europe. Nevertheless the prediction of the prophet has received a striking fulfilment. Amid the mountains of Edom stood a city which, in ancient times, was the centre of the trade of the world. To this city the eastern tribes transported the merchandise of India and Arabia; and from this point it was again sent forth to the nations of the west. To this trade, and the great and continual intercourse which it occasioned between all countries and Edom, the prophet unquestionably refers. His prediction, "I will cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth,"[1] simply imports, we conceive, the entire annihilation of that traffic. And never did prophecy receive a more striking fulfilment.

We have already contemplated the small beginnings from which arose the magnificent commerce of

[1] Ezekiel, xxxv, 7.

Idumea. The early Edomite freighted his bark with the produce of Arabia, and having launched it on the bosom of the Red sea, guided it along the shore to Ethiopia and Egypt, whence he returned laden with such necessaries as his own country did not supply. This trade gradually increased till at last, as Strabo informs us, armies of camels were employed in conveying it through Edom to the Mediterranean.[1] At that time Edom was the great thoroughfare of the world. Petra was the mart of nations. To this city long lines of caravans might be seen directing their course from the Persian gulf, from all points of Arabia, and from the shores of the Red sea; here they all met, and deposited their wares; which other caravans conveyed to the shores of the Mediterranean, over whose waters they were transported to the nations of the west. Under the reign of the Greeks the commerce of Idumea appears to

[1] We shall subjoin the passage in Strabo relating to the Nabathean commerce, tom. ii, p. 1109:—"Ἐκ μὲν οὖν της Λευκῆς κώμης εἰς Πέτραν, ἐντεῦθεν δ' εἰς Ῥινοκόλουρα τῆς πρὸς Αἰγύπτῳ Φοινίκης τὰ φορτία κομίζεται κἀντεῦθεν εἰς τοὺς ἄλλους· νυνὶ δὲ τοπλέον εἰς την Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τῳ Νείλῳ κατάγεται· τὰ δ' ἐκ της Ἀραβίας και της Ἰνδικῆς εἰς Μυὸς ὅρμον· εἶθ ὑπερθέσεις εἰς Κοπτόν της Θηβαΐδος κἀμήλοις ἐνδιώρυγι τοῦ Νείλου κιμένη εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειαν." "Merchandise is transported from the village of Luce to Petra, and from that city to Rhinocolura, in Phœnicia, on the confines of Egypt, and thence into other parts. At present the greater part of this traffic passes into Alexandria by the Nile. The merchandise of Arabia and India, being brought to the harbour of Mus, is transported on camels to Coptus of the Thebaid, thence to Alexandria by the canal of the Nile." To explain the above, we may mention that the village of Luce was situated on the Red sea, the merchandise being, in part at least, brought thither in ships, took the direction Strabo points out. By the time of Strabo the trade of Petra had declined; accordingly he tells us that the greater part of the merchandise being brought to Myos, a town situated at the entrance of the Suez branch of the Red sea, was thence carried direct into Egypt.

have reached its height, and the vast wealth which it poured into the country is attested by the numbers of its people and the splendours of its capital. The conquests of the Romans, which opened new channels of trade, disturbed the commercial relations of Idumea. The traffic of the Persian gulf, which now began to ascend the Euphrates, was carried across the Desert at a much higher point than Petra. Palmyra rose with unrivalled splendour in the midst of sands; and from this period the Nabathean trade began rapidly to decline, their capital to be deserted, and their people to return to their former pastoral and wandering habits. The discoveries of the Portuguese gave the death-blow to their commerce. The merchandise of India is now carried into Europe by sea; and many centuries have elapsed since a single caravan or a solitary trader was seen passing out or returning to this land. Who but Omniscience could have foreseen the discoveries to which future ages were to give birth, and the effects these discoveries were to produce in opening new channels of trade, and filling with desolation and silence the ancient and once crowded thoroughfare of Edom? And when we think that there is not the least likelihood of the commerce of the world ever reverting to its old channel, we see that Jehovah has not only fulfilled the prediction in cutting off from Edom him that passeth out and him that returneth, but that, in all time to come, *none shall pass through it for ever and ever.*

This brings us to the cities of Edom; the complete and perpetual desolation of which the prophets foretold. Our next chapter will introduce us to the

ruins of Petra, the capital of Edom—in some respects the most remarkable ruins in the world. This city, into which commerce for ages had poured her treasures, where the arts had fixed their seat, and which they had done their utmost to embellish; whose bulwarks were the everlasting hills on which the fury of the elements and the wrath of armies might be poured in vain; this city, we say, having received the notice and the admiration of antiquity, and having thus touched "the highest point of all its greatness," sank into obscurity, and for many ages was lost to the modern world. She was visited only by the wanderer of the desert, who looked coldly on her illustrious remains; or, if their magnificence chanced to awaken his wonder, he sagely concluded that these stupendous fabrics which had endured from age to age, and appeared to be as stable as the earth itself, were the work of genii, not of men. But though unknown, Petra was not lost. Providence preserved it there, set, as Laborde terms it, in a framework of rock that it might be brought forth in after ages as a monument of the truth of the divine word—that when the time should come that man would deny that word—would proclaim its prophecies imposture and its histories a fable, the eternal rocks and the solitary palaces of Petra might rise up and condemn him.

CHAPTER XIV.

EDOM.

Ruin of her cities—Prophecy quoted—Cities so completely destroyed that no particular description can be offered of them—Numerous traces of their former existence scattered all over the country—Improbability of their ever being rebuilt—Edom desolate from Teman—Bozrah a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse—PETRA—Great interest attaching to its ruins—Valley in which they are found—Sublime entrance on the east—Rocky sides of the pass hewn into tombs—Great temple—Impression made by its sudden appearance and singular beauty Description of interior—Theatre—Plain on which the city stood—General view of the ruins—Reflections on the past and present state of the capital of Edom—Triumphal arch—Ancient highway—Palace—Forum—Magnificent tombs in mountains around—Ancient dwellings in the rock—Edifices of Petra erected at different eras—Ruins ridiculed by the Arabs—Covered with thorns—Tenanted by owls and lizards—Manner of the fall of Petra—Lessons taught by her present state.

If we except Petra—a city so remarkable in many respects—we can say little regarding the individual ruins of Edom. It does not appear that the ancient names have been preserved by the Arabs; or, perhaps, from the hurried manner in which this country has generally been visited hitherto, they have not been recorded by travellers: we are therefore unable, in the meantime, to identify more than one or two existing sites, with the towns noticed by ancient writers. Burckhardt enquired after the names of the ancient cities, but in vain; and this would lead us to infer,

that it is owing to the former rather than the latter cause that, in speaking of the cities of this land, we are unable to offer any description of their ruins, or indeed to point out the spot where they stood—a fact which is a stronger proof than the most minute description could be, of the complete fulfilment of the doom which the prophets pronounced upon them.

"Whereas, Edom saith, we are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down."[1] "I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate. I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return; and ye shall know that I am the Lord."[2] "Surely he shall make their habitations desolate."[3]

The soil of Edom was never so fertile as that of Ammon and Moab, and her cities consequently were never so numerous; but though Edom could not rival in this respect countries which were almost literally covered with towns, her cities were very far from being insignificant, even in point of numbers; but it was foretold that they should be thrown down, laid waste, and made perpetual desolations; and at this day they are desolate—most desolate.

We have already alluded to the report which Volney received from the Arabs regarding the ruins which abound in the desert east of Seir, that it contained "upwards of thirty ruined towns, entirely deserted."[4] That plain had not then been traversed by any European; but since that period the testimony

[1] Malachi, i, 4. [2] Ezekiel, xxxv, 4, 9. [3] Jeremiah, xlix, 20.
[4] Volney, vol. ii, p. 225.

of Burckhardt has amply verified the report of the Bedouins. Here this traveller found numerous vestiges of paved roads, sites which had obviously been built upon, remains of what he could not doubt had once been large cities, and, in the neighbourhood of some of the inhabited villages, large pieces of beautiful saline marble, which nobody could tell whence they had come. "In many places," says he, "it is overgrown with wild herbs, and must once have been thickly inhabited, for the traces of many ruined towns and villages are met with on both sides of the Hadj (pilgrim's) road between Maan and Akaba, as well as between Maan and the plains of Haouran, in which direction are also many springs." [1] In the mountains of Seir the ruins appear to be equally numerous; Burckhardt has given a list of these sites, with the modern names. [2] Laborde spent some time in exploring these mountains. In the valleys around Petra, he found ruins which he supposed had once been suburbs of the ancient capital, — "young swarms sent forth from the parent hive." Had he explored the neighbouring valleys, it is likely that he would have found in them the remains of similar establishments. [3] On the declivities of the hills he frequently found the ruins of towns; and his guide told him that such sites were frequently met with. [4] The traveller cannot enrich his page with any description of their magnificence; the ruins of Ammon and Moab serve as folds for flocks, but those of Edom cannot be turned even to this use. But their insignificance or splendour is a matter of small

[1] Burckhardt, p. 436.
[2] Burckhardt, p. 444.
[3] Laborde, p. 195.
[4] Laborde, p. 203.

importance as regards the prophecy; the nameless heap is an equally impressive monument of the truth of the Divine word as the sculptured pillar; we know that here a flourishing city once stood, and we know who pronounced the doom beneath which we behold it lying crushed and broken. "Of the towns which I find laid down in D'Anville's maps, between Zoara and Aelana," says Burckhardt, "no traces remain, *Thoana* excepted, which is the present Dhana."[1] Thus have the "tabernacles of Edom" been swept away, as the Psalmist foretold. *The tabernacles of Edom and the Ishmaelites said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession. O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind.*[2]

Not only was it foretold that the cities of Edom should be laid waste; it was likewise foretold that they should never recover from their overthrow. *I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return.*[3] To this hour they have not returned; nor is there the smallest probability of their being rebuilt in any after age. The soil of Edom is wasted beyond the hope of ever being reclaimed; to the end of time this country must remain the same desolate and howling waste which it is at this day; and it is vain to expect that the cities shall rise from their ruins, or that others shall be built, in a country where there is neither commerce nor agriculture. The few Arabian peasants who form a permanent settlement in some of the valleys never carry their attempts in architecture beyond the erection of a few mud huts. These they plant commonly in the mountains of

[1] Burckhardt, p. 443. [2] Psalm lxxxiii, 6, 12, 13.
[3] Ezekiel, xxxv, 9.

Shéra, by the margin of some stream, which enables them to cultivate a small portion of the soil, which they sow with dhourra. These miserable villages of mud are at this day the only representatives of the magnificent cities with which the land of Edom was once adorned. *Surely he shall make their habitations desolate. All the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes.*

The next prophecy is a beautiful instance of the clear and precise terms in which the predictions of the Old Testament are given; it relates to Teman, a city which very probably dates its origin from those early times when the "man of Uz" lived in this land; for, among the friends who came to mourn with him, we read of Eliphaz the Temanite. In the modern Maan, which stands on the eastern border of Edom, we find the ancient Teman. *I will stretch out my hand upon Edom, and make it desolate from Teman.*[1] The terms of the prophecy imply, we conceive, that Teman itself should escape, in part at least, the predicted desolation; and at this day we find it enjoying the exemption which the prophet promised it. Teman can still boast of gardens and vineyards, which are a source of great profit to its inhabitants, their fruits being eagerly purchased by the pilgrims on their way to Mecca. "The pomegranates, apricots, and peaches of Maan are of the finest quality."[2] But from Maan, in every direction, all is desolate—the soil is wasted and the cities are destroyed. The analysis we have already offered of Burckhardt's journey from the eastern plain through the mountains of the ancient Seir, to the great wilderness on

[1] Ezekiel, xxv, 13. [2] Burckhardt, p. 436.

the west, shows that, in that direction, the divine hand has been stretched out upon Edom to make it "desolate from Teman;" and if we draw a line from Maan to the Hauran on the north, we find that in that direction too the country has been made desolate. "At present," says Burckhardt, "all this country is a desert, and Maan is the only inhabited place in it."[1] Flourishing cities once existed along this line, but in traversing it at this day, we pass one ruin after another till we come to Maan, the very town the prophet specified, which we find inhabited. Who but Omniscience, at the distance of so many ages, could have pointed out, amidst a multitude of cities all equally flourishing, that individual city which was to escape the destruction by which the rest were to be overtaken? Who but Omniscience could have said. *These* shall be laid in ruin, but *this* shall escape? This was done in the case of Teman; and Teman is inhabited at this day.

Almost the only ruins in Edom which we are now able to identify are those of the two cities whose overthrow was particularly and specially foretold by the prophets — Bozrah the northern, and Petra the southern capital. After a brief account of the present state of Bozrah, we shall hasten to the ruins of her still more illustrious companion, Petra. "I have sworn by myself, saith the Lord, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse."[2] So completely has the prophecy been ful-

[1] Burckhardt, p. 436.

[2] Jeremiah, xlix, 13. There is great difficulty connected with the site of this city; from its being spoken of in some passages of Scripture as belonging to Israel (Micah, ii, 12); in others as belonging to Moab (Jeremiah, xlviii, 24); and in others as be-

filled that Burckhardt has occupied eleven pages in describing the desolations of Bozrah. Let us draw nigh and contemplate this scene: few lessons can be more impressive than those which are taught by these noble remains, standing alone in the desert and proclaiming to all ages the truth of that word which foretold the ruin by which they have been overtaken.

Bozrah, which is famous as the city mentioned by the prophet in his triumphal ode, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?"[1] is situated in the open plain, in the southern part of the Hauran. Its name, in the Syriac tongue, means the strong fortress, and several parts of the thick wall by which it was anciently enclosed, and which gave to it the reputation of great strength, still remain. The ruins cover a large oval of about three miles in circumference; and are approached on the west by a broad paved road, the work of the Romans. The city-gate, a noble arch, is still standing and entire. The moment we enter we discover the general arrangement of the ruins. A street runs eastward

longing to Edom (Jeremiah, xlix. 13). After comparing the passages of Scripture (Joshua, xxi, 27, &c.) and Josephus (Antiq. xii, 8,) which relate to this city, with the ancient authorities cited by Reland (lib. iii), we have come to the conclusion that these various passages refer to one and the same city, namely, to that which was situated in the half tribe of Manasseh, and appointed as a city of refuge; that after the captivity it was possessed by the Moabites, and ultimately by the Nabatheans; that it is the same with that which Eusebius and Jerome, and other early Christian writers speak of as the metropolis of Arabia, and whose ruins are found, as we have indicated above, in the southern part of the Hauran, still bearing the name of Bozrah. That the Nabathean territory extended thus high, is evident from Josephus's Antiquities, xii, 8, where he informs us that Judas, having crossed the Jordan with his army and gone a journey of three days to the east, lighted on the Nabatheans.

[1] Isaiah, lxiii, 1.

in a straight line through the city, and appears to have been the principal street of Bozrah; part of the ancient pavement remains, and on either side is a foot-path for passengers. This street is crossed at right angles by another, running from north to south. Those who wish to know the state and appearance of the individual ruins may consult the authorities cited below. The ground is covered with the remains of Roman theatres, Christian churches, Mohammedan mosques, Saracenic castles, triumphal arches, and numerous columns belonging to the Doric, Corinthian, and Ionic orders; some of these are richly sculptured, many are fallen, but a few remain erect. Around these monuments are the ruins of private dwellings, the walls of many of which still remain, but the roofs have fallen in. Beyond the walls are numerous ruins, obviously those of the suburbs of the ancient city. Of the vineyards for which Bozrah was famed in the time of the prophets, and even so late as that of the Romans, not a vestige remains. Olives grew here a few years ago, but these too have vanished. The only thing which tends to enliven this scene of desolation are a few rose trees, which, when Burckhardt was there, were just beginning to open their buds amid the ruins of a place which has so emphatically been rendered "a curse." A few wretched families, driven by oppression from other parts of the Hauran, assemble here, and live amongst the ruins.[1] Such at this day is the state of a city which even so late as the seventh century, when the Saracens encamped before it, was reckoned the mar-

[1] Burckhardt, pp. 226—236; Buckingham, 'Arab Tribes,' pp. 194—209; Lindsay, vol. ii, pp. 132—150.

ket of Syria and Mesopotamia, and could send forth from its gates twelve thousand horsemen.[1] *I have sworn by myself, saith the Lord, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse.*

But by far the most interesting ruins in Edom, and indeed in the world, are those of her capital, Petra. There is not in all the earth a more striking monument of the truth of the divine word than these imperishable remains, so clearly was the ruin of this city foretold, and so exactly has it been fulfilled. Petra is not indeed named in the prophecy, but she is alluded to in terms which can apply only to her, and which mark her out as the city referred to, as distinctly as if the prophet had pronounced her name. She is described as dwelling "in the clefts of the rock," as holding "the height of the hill," as making her "nest as high as the eagle," terms which describe with graphic force the position and appearance of Petra, but which cannot apply to any other city in Edom, or indeed in the world. Let us repair to this site then, and behold how that city which, like the eagle, dwelt in the clefts of the rock, has now, in fulfilment of the divine denunciation, been brought down. The scene is fitted to awaken higher emotions than those of mere curiosity; we can feel nothing but awe in the presence of these empty tombs and silent palaces—the proofs of the power, and the truth, and the righteousness of that God who pronounced and inflicted the doom of Petra.[2]

[1] Gibbon, vol. ix, p. 382.

[2] No doubt remains now that the ruins discovered by Burckhardt in the mountains of Shera in 1812 are those of the ancient Petra. Their position exactly agrees with that assigned to the

The valley which contains the ruins of this city is about two miles in circumference, and is situated in the very heart of the mountains of Seir; it is a deep hollow, called by the natives Wady Mousa, and enclosed on all sides by the naked and lofty face of the mountains which range round it, and form a defence compared with which the mightiest bulwarks which were ever raised by art around other cities sink into utter insignificance. The only regular approach which has yet been discovered to the city is from the east, and is truly sublime—a long narrow defile, produced evidently by some tremendous convulsion, and dark as night in some parts from the overhanging cliffs, which almost meet at a distance of from four to seven hundred feet above the head of the spectator. A small stream flows in the bottom of this ravine, and, continuing its course beyond it, crosses the plain on which the city stood. Anciently it was paved over, but the pavement in most places has

capital of the Nabatheans by Strabo and other ancient geographers. Strabo describes Petra as distant from Jericho a short journey of three or four days, and one of five days from Phonicon, a port on the Red sea. "Ταύτῃ δὲ καὶ ἐγγυτάτω ἐστὶ τριῶν ἢ τεττάρων ὁδὸς ἡμερῶν εἰς Ἰεριχουντα, εἰς δὲ τὸν Φοινικῶνα πέντε," (tom. ii, p. 1107), which agrees with the position of the ruins described above. Eusebius, Jerome, (Onomast. in Ω) and Josephus (Antiq. lib. iv, c. 4), agree in saying that mount Hor, on which Aaron died, adjoined Petra; and the Arabs to this day point out his sepulchre on a mountain a little to the west of the ruins. The words of Josephus are these: "When he (Moses and the Tribes) came to a place which the Arabians esteem their metropolis, which was formerly called Arce, but has now the name of Petra, at this place, which was encompassed with high mountains, Aaron went up one of them in the sight of the whole army, Moses having before told him that he was to die, for this place was over against them." The dimensions and character of the valley in which the ruins are found, also accord minutely, as we shall afterwards show, with the descriptions which Strabo and Pliny have given of it.

given way; its sides are walled to give a proper direction to its waters, and check the violence of the winter torrents. Provision was made for the supply of the city with water during summer by the formation of channels in the face of the rock along the ravine at a much higher elevation than the bed of the torrent; the earthen pipes used for conveying the water may yet be seen embedded and secured with mortar, in horizontal grooves cut in the mountain. Had not this expedient been resorted to, the stream would have been liable to be dried up in the broad torrent bed, or spent in the irrigation of the fields at the entrance of the valley, and the inhabitants of Petra would have been left without the necessary supply in the midst of rocky mountains.

At the mouth of the pass, where we have now arrived, begins the vast necropolis of Petra. A great number of sepulchral openings are here visible at different altitudes in the sides of the mountain. As the ravine does not contract for some time, the body of light which it here admits is sufficiently strong to exhibit distinctly the objects which it contains.

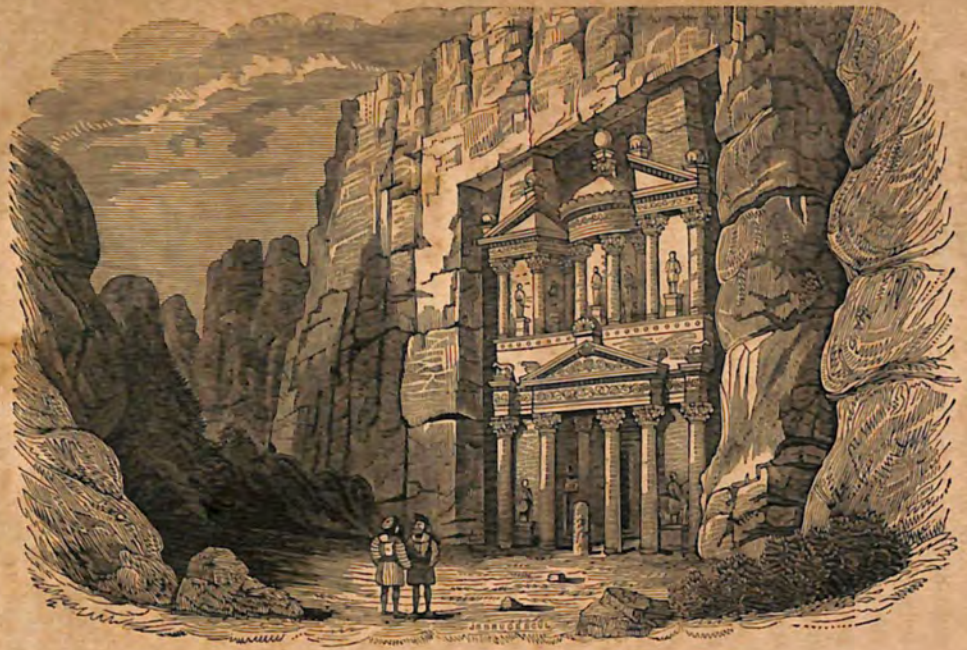
One of the first curiosities which receives the attention of the visitor is a large mass of rock detached from the mountain and hewn into a square pillar. The bottom of this column has been hollowed into a cave or tomb, and the upper part remains solid. There are four of these mausolea, or erect tombs, standing at a short distance from each other in the ravine. The largest appears to be of very ancient construction; its ornaments have been defaced by time.[1]

[1] Burckhardt, p. 422.

"As we advanced," say Irby and Mangles, who on the whole have given the finest account of the approach to Petra, "the natural features of the defile grew more and more imposing at every step, and the excavations and sculpture more frequent on both sides, till it presented at last a continued street of tombs, beyond which the rocks, gradually approaching each other, seemed all at once to close without any outlet. There is, however, one frightful chasm for the passage of the stream, which furnishes, as it did anciently, the only avenue to Petra on this side. It is impossible to conceive any thing more awful or sublime than such an approach; the width is not more than just sufficient for the passage of two horsemen abreast; the sides are in all parts perpendicular, varying from four hundred to seven hundred feet in height," (Stephens says from five hundred to a thousand,) "and they often overhang to such a degree, that, without their absolutely meeting, the sky is intercepted and completely shut out for one hundred yards together, and there is little more light than in a cavern."[1]

This pass, overhung as it is by the shadow of death, forms a fitting approach to a city which has dwelt so long among the dead, and which, as it now exhibits almost nothing but tombs, may be regarded as the very throne of death. Gone are now the multitudes of Petra! Silent is now the voice of Edom's capital, which, as it re-echoed from cliff to cliff, told the traveller as he went forward in the dim twilight of the pass, that he was approaching the busy seat of men. His approach is now greeted by other and

[1] Irby and Mangles, pp. 414, 415.



GREAT TEMPLE IN PETRA.

very different sounds; even those of eagles, hawks, and owls, which congregate here in great numbers, and which, as they soar above his head, startling the cliffs of Petra with their screams, seem to say, 'We have come hither in obedience to the summons of the prophet; *we* are now the only tenants on this seat of departed splendour; Jehovah hath divided it unto us by line; from generation to generation shall we dwell here.'

This part of the ravine is called the Syk. Very near its entrance is a bold arch thrown across at a great height, connecting the opposite cliffs. No one has yet been able to climb up to it; it is therefore unanimously pronounced by the Arabs to be the work of the Djan, or evil genii. Below the bridge are large and elegant niches wrought in the rock for the reception of statues; in some of these the bases of figures are still visible.[1]

The shade and moisture of this pass seem highly favourable to vegetation; the tamarisk, the wild fig, and the oleander, grow here with great luxuriance. The banks of the stream and the bottom of the path are covered with them, so as to obstruct in some places the passage of the traveller; or striking their roots on high in the rock by the side of the tombs, they hang down in a beautiful manner, and add materially to the romantic wildness of the ravine.

We go forward for two miles in this narrow and dark defile, when all at once, the cliffs overhead retiring, a full beam of light breaks in from the east, and reveals, in all its splendour the beautiful front of a magnificent temple. Its sudden apparition, for it

[1] Burckhardt, p. 423.

appears as if it had started into being at the moment in some marvellous manner, amid rocks and darkness, fills the traveller with surprise; which soon gives place, however, to wonder and delight at the elegance and beauty of its architecture. Age after age has this magnificent creation stood here, beautifying the termination of this singular pass, and revealing its splendour only to the eye of the Arab; yet it is as untouched by time, its embellishments are as perfect, where they have not been effaced on purpose, as if the hand which fashioned it had not yet mouldered into dust. "There is, in fact," say Irby and Mangles, "scarcely a building of forty years' standing in England so well preserved in the greater part of it architectural decorations." This it owes in part to the excellence of the climate, and in part to the cliffs above, which overhang it so as to protect it from the weather. From the point where this temple is first seen to the termination of the pass, are only a few paces; the ravine leads the traveller out into a circular area of about fifty yards in width. On the side opposite to the mouth of the ravine stands the temple we have just noticed, but so placed as to front the opening, hence the suddenness and singularity of the sight.

The impression which the first sight of this temple made on the party of Irby and Mangles is thus described. "Where they (the precipices) are at the highest, a beam of stronger light breaks in at the close of the dark perspective and opens to view, half seen at first through the tall narrow opening, columns, statues, and cornices, of a light and finished taste, as if fresh from the chisel, without the tints or weather

stains of age, and executed in a stone of pale rose colour, which was warmed at the moment we came in sight of them with the full light of the morning sun."[1]

The natives call this monument the Khasne, or Pharaoh's treasury. The edifice, however, is not a palace but a tomb. Its front, which like all the rest of the building is cut out of the rock, is from sixty to sixty-five feet in height, and consists of two stories. The first is composed of a Corinthian colonnade, with a pilaster on each side, supporting an architrave richly wrought. The second consists of six columns, with colossal figures placed between them. The two central columns are surmounted by a dome, crowned with an urn.[2] The arrangements of the interior are very simple. The visitor first enters the vestibule—crossing which he enters the main body of the tomb, which is a spacious room hewn in the rock, about sixteen paces square and about twenty-five feet high. On each of the three sides of this great chamber is a door richly carved, which leads respectively into a small apartment designed for the reception of the dead.[3]

The Arabs, we have said, call this tomb the treasury of Pharaoh, from an idea that the place once belonged to this sovereign, and that he deposited his riches somewhere amidst its ruins. Having sought for them in vain in all the tombs which are accessible, they have come to the conclusion that they are deposited in the urn which surmounts this edifice, which, however, is beyond their reach. As they pass through the ravine, they stop for a moment,

[1] Irby and Mangles, p. 418.
[2] Laborde, p. 171.
[3] Burckhardt, p. 424.

charge their guns, aim at the ball which contains so much wealth, and endeavour by firing to demolish it, and get at the treasure which it conceals. The urn, however, resists all their attacks, and the Arab departs murmuring at that king who had the cunning to place his treasure at a distance of a hundred and twenty feet above their heads.[1] The impression which the extraordinary beauty of this temple, seen in such singular circumstances, makes upon the mind, and the tenacity with which it clings to the memory afterwards, every traveller declares himself unable to describe. "Even now," says Stephens, "that I have returned to the pursuits and the thought engrossing incidents of a life in the busiest city in the world, often in situations as widely different as light from darkness. I see before me the façade of that temple. Neither the Coliseum at Rome, grand and interesting as it is, nor the ruins of the Acropolis at Athens, nor the Pyramids, nor the mighty temples of the Nile, are so often present to my memory.[2]

Beyond this tomb the ravine again contracts, and taking a north-east direction, extends for about three hundred yards farther. It is lined on both sides by an infinite variety of tombs hewn in the rock, both Arabian and Roman. The interior of these tombs is similar to the one we have already described. Sometimes cavities are dug in the floor, sometimes niches are worked in the wall for the reception of dead bodies, and sometimes side chambers are formed. The rock is hewn away in front all around, so as to cause the face of the tomb to stand out.[3]

[1] Laborde, p. 170. [2] Stephens, vol. ii, pp. 63, 64.
[3] Burckhardt, p. 426.

The craggy heights which border this area are mostly inaccessible; but in some instances flights of steps have been cut in the rock, though the ascent is difficult. There is one high and conical mountain which has a spiral staircase leading to its very summit, whence the spectator may descry a great vase which crowns another monument, rising up amongst the mountains in the north-west. Art has endeavoured to multiply the singularly varied forms which nature has already given to the mountains around this city, by hewing their summits in some cases into small pyramids.[1]

Having gone forward in this pass a few hundred paces, the traveller comes next to the magnificent remains of a theatre cut entirely out of the bosom of the mountain, with all its benches. Upwards of thirty rows of seats remain. It may be capable of containing about three thousand spectators. The winter torrents which descend from the mountains above it, have filled its area with gravel.[2] Here the rank and wealth and beauty of Petra were wont to assemble, while the voice of their mirth startled the echoes of the adjoining tombs. Now there is silence—deep silence within these walls of rock, nor has there for ages been aught to disturb it, save the torrent's dash or the eagle's scream.

"To scoop out a theatre," says Laborde, "in the side of a mountain, seems to be an enterprise of infinite labour; but to form it thus from a rocky substance, is an enterprise still more astonishing.... ..... But what surprised us most, was the selection of such a spot for a place of amusement—consi-

[1] Irby and Mangles, p. 422. [2] Burckhardt, p. 427.

dering the prospect it afforded on all sides of death and its mansions, which touch the very sides of the theatre."[1] "The theatre is surrounded by sepulchres—every avenue leading to it is full of them."[2]

About an hundred and fifty paces beyond the ruins of the theatre the path opens into a wide plain. Here the ruins of the city burst on the view in their full grandeur. The plain is cumbered with heaps of rubbish, in the midst of which stand one or two broken arches, as mourners over the numerous and beautiful structures which are here overthrown. Around the valley on all sides rises a perpendicular wall of rock, which has afforded to art a rare opportunity of displaying her wonders. Accordingly she has covered the sides of the mountains with the most superb structures—dwellings and tombs decorated with colonnades, which rise above one another in successive rows, portals, architraves, and surmounting urns. These creations are countless in number and endless in their variety; and the grandeur of the scene is considerably enhanced by the romantic shapes and craggy summits of the mountains which tower majestically in the background.[3]

[1] Laborde, pp. 162, 163. [2] Irby and Mangles, p. 428.

[3] This agrees exactly with the description which Strabo has given of Petra. He speaks of it as situated on a plain, defended all around with a wall of rocks, and adorned within with gardens and fountains,—"Μητροπολις δε των Ναβαταίων, ἐστὶν ἡ Πέτρα καλουμένη· κεῖται γὰρ ἐπὶ χωρίου τάλλα ὁμαλοῦ καὶ ἐπιπέδου, κυκλῳ δὲ πέτρα φρουρουμένου, τὰ μὲν ἐκτὸς κρημνῶ ἀποτόμου, τὰ δὲ ἐντὸς πηγὰς ἀφθόνους ἐχοντος εἰς τε ὑδρείαν καὶ κηπείαν."—Tom. ii, p. 1106. Pliny (vi, 28) adds another feature which identifies the ruins described above with the ancient Petra, namely, that the city was watered by a river. "Nabataei oppidum incolunt Petram nomine in convalle, paulo minus 2 mill. pass. amplitudinis circumdatum montibus inaccessis, amne interfluente."

This valley contains all that now remains of the once celebrated capital of Edom. Let us pause and survey the scene before us. It is one of desolation, but fraught with lessons of instruction. Cast your eye over that plain. You behold it covered with the wrecks of a once flourishing city, amid which we can still plainly trace the outlines of streets. The arch crushed, the pillar broken, the public temple and the private dwelling overthrown and trodden down, now lie buried together in the same indistinguishable heap. Look around on the sides of the mountains which girdle the valley. The magnificent structures which cover them are the tombs of the departed princes and rulers of Edom—the "kings and counsellors of the earth," who, in the language of Job, "built desolate places for themselves." Lift your eyes up to these soaring cliffs. You behold them pierced with innumerable sepulchres of plain and simple construction. There, no doubt, the multitude of her common people were buried. How silent and desolate is the scene! The voice of man is mute; and you hear only the fierce scream of the eagle or the doleful cry of the owl. This was once the throne of Edom's power. What is it now?—the grave of her glory! Her nobles and her princes have passed away—their tombs only survive. "They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom; but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing."[1] The sight of these palaces recalls to the imagination the crowds that once thronged this scene. We instinctively look for inhabitants; but man has fled from the spot.

[1] Isaiah, xxxiv, 12.

The awful silence that reigns over the scene is appalling and almost insupportable. How impossible is it to survey the site of this once proud city without feeling how fearfully the denunciation of Heaven has been inflicted on her. *Thy terribleness hath deceived thee and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill. Though thou shouldst make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the Lord. No man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it.*[1]

We shall now go forward and survey the ruins. We have at present before us a spacious plain, enclosed on all sides by lofty mountains, and covered with the wrecks of former buildings. The stream, we have already mentioned, flows amongst the ruins, and is the only living thing in this valley of death, save the unclean and ravenous birds that inhabit it. Of the ruins that cover the plain little can be said, they are so completely destroyed. Nearly in the middle of the area stands the remains of a triumphal arch. The fragments strewed around it appear to be sufficient to permit a restoration of this monument.[2] Through this arch runs the ancient paved highway—the very path over which the merchandise of India and Arabia was wont to be transported into Europe. It is now untrodden save by the Arab, whose camel perchance bears a little gum-arabic, which he is carrying to Cairo, to exchange for the few articles which he needs in the desert. Not

[1] Jeremiah, xlix, 16, 18. [2] Laborde, pp. 160, 161.

far from this arch are the remains of a colossal temple. Laborde mentions a singular fact regarding this ruin—namely, that its various parts are placed on the ground in an order analogous to that which they occupied in the building. "Here are columns whose different component parts, from the base to the capital, follow each other on the ground. Here are also seen the foundations uncovered, which seem awaiting the first layer of stones. It looks like a vast pile asleep ready to start up."[1] Near to the west end of the valley are the remains of a stately edifice, called by the natives the *Kaszr Beut Faraouu*, the palace of Pharaoh's daughter. The walls remain. The interior is divided into three parallel chambers, and there seem to have been several stories. Its interior arrangements have made it to be regarded as a palace.[2] On the other side of the river and opposite the palace are the ruins of a temple, with one column standing. Near to the triumphal arch the valley has been levelled, and the river covered with large slabs, for the purpose of prolonging this level space.[3] This seems to have been the Forum of Petra; and from an examination of the ruins around, it appears to have been bordered on each side by sumptuous monuments. How easily may the imagination give reality to the scene which this spot must often have exhibited in former days. Here the citizens of Petra assembled—here her orators harangued and here her laws were administered. Covered with the magnificent trophies of art, and commanding a view of the temples and tombs with

[1] Laborde, pp. 161, 162. [2] Irby and Mangles, p. 425.
[3] Laborde, p. 160.

which the horizon all around was crowded, nothing could exceed the grandeur of the spectacle. But here, at this hour, Ruin sits enthroned, with desolation at her right hand and silence at her left. Ah! how applicable are the lines of the poet to Edom,—

> "The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
> Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
> An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
> Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago."

Such are a few of the chief monuments whose ruins now cover the plain. Let us next turn to the mountains which surround the valley, and survey the gorgeous tombs which adorn their sides. When we speak of the tombs of Petra, it must not be supposed that they are at all similar to the tombs of our own country. In external magnificence they rival palaces. Their fronts are lofty, some of them rising to a height of upwards of an hundred feet, adorned with colonnades, porticos, and all manner of architectural ornaments. Let us then take our stand in the middle of the valley, with our face towards the mountains which bound the plain on the east. The first object which meets the eye in the south-east is a monument bearing marks of amazing industry. The declivity of the mountain had been cut down, so as to gain a platform on which the architect might proceed in erecting his design. Two sides have been formed into a doric portico. The third, which abuts against the mountain, has been wrought into a beautiful front—four columns supporting a pediment, surmounted by an urn. A doorway in the centre conducts into a spacious excavated chamber, which from its numerous recesses

would seem to have been originally designed for a place of burial; but in latter ages it appears to have been used as a church. An inscription records the date of its consecration; and the fastenings for tapestry and pictures are still visible in the walls. So far as has yet been discovered, this is the only remains of the establishment of Christianity in Petra, which was once a metropolitan see.[1]

Adjoining this on the north is another tomb in the mountain, of Corinthian architecture. Its front is richly wrought. It appears an imitation of the great temple which fronts the eastern entrance, to which, however, it is decidedly inferior both in conception and execution. A little farther on rises another edifice truly magnificent; it consists of three rows of columns, rising one above another, and ascending to a great height on the mountain. Numerous openings between the columns lead to the chambers within. The combined effect of these rows of columns is imposing to a degree which it is difficult to describe. On the north of this rises another tomb, less imposing in its appearance, but more interesting in another respect. It bears an inscription in Latin, which announces that it is (or rather was—for like all the tombs of Petra it is now empty) the resting-place of Quintus Florentius, who was governor of this part of Arabia about the time of Hadrian, as is supposed.[2]

Above these tombs, in the face of the cliff, are others of plainer construction—so that the mountains, from their bottom to their summit, are excavated into mansions for the dead. What we have

[1] Irby and Mangles, p. 420. [2] Laborde, pp. 175–180.

said of the hills on the eastern side of the plain, is true likewise of those which enclose the valley on the north, the west, and the south. All around the eye beholds myriads of excavated tombs; only these are inferior in point of magnificence to those we have described. Nor is it only the sides of the mountains which front the plain that are thus excavated. A great number of similar valleys branch off from the main valley of Wady Mousa, which in like manner are filled with sepulchres, and in some cases terminated by a tomb of exquisite workmanship. These valleys abound with luxuriant vines, wild fig-trees, and oleanders, probably the remains of gardens, which Strabo informs us once graced the city. They shade the streams, clothe the face of the rock, and add beauty to the monuments, by clustering round them, and in part concealing their decay. The ancient inhabitants appear to have spared no labour to afford every access to the tombs. Roads have been cut in the rock; and where the sepulchre is placed at a considerable elevation on the mountain, the ascent is performed by a magnificent staircase.

In speaking of Petra, we have supposed that the houses of her inhabitants were situated on the plain, and that the mountains around were devoted to the reception of the dead. This was clearly the case with regard to many of the magnificent formations into which the mountain has been hewn, seeing they contain pits for dead bodies, but others as clearly were dwellings. Travellers speak of them, in some instances, as being illuminated by windows, an arrangement obviously unnecessary had the edifice

been designed only for the dead. Stephens mentions one which particularly attracted his attention, and which he had no doubt had been occupied as a dwelling. It consisted of one large chamber, and running along the bottom of one of its side walls was a stone bench of a foot high, and two or three in breadth, in form like the divans in the east at the present day. At the inner end the rock had been hewn into several smaller apartments; divided from each other by a thin partition-wall left standing, like stalls in a stable. These he conjectures had been used as sleeping apartments by the members of the family—the mysteries of bars and bolts and folding doors being then, he supposes, unknown; a supposition however not consistent with the early perfection of the arts in Edom. There were no paintings or decorations of any kind within the chamber, a defect however atoned for by the beauty of the rock out of which it had been hewn. Like the whole stony rampart which encircles the city, it was of a dark ground, with veins of white, blue, red, purple, and sometimes scarlet and light orange, running through it in rainbow streaks. The colours were fresh and lively, being preserved from the weather, and the work being of an unusual finish, the effect was hardly inferior to that of the paintings in the tombs of the kings at Thebes. "This House," says Stephens, "had no doubt been the residence of one who had strutted his hour of brief existence among the wealthy citizens of Petra. In front was a large table of rock, forming a sort of court for the excavated dwelling, where probably, year after year, in this beautiful climate, the Edomite of old sat under the gathering shades of evening,

sometimes looking down upon the congregated thousands in the stirring scenes in the theatre beneath, or beyond upon the palaces and dwellings in the area of the then populous city." [1]

Before we close the chapter, we have a few particulars to add, which will bring the truth of the prophecy still more strongly out as regards this fallen city. The tombs and buildings of Petra are not all of the same era; some of them have been erected in the infancy of the arts, and are of the plainest construction. Indeed Irby and Mangles say that the majority are so; the pipes which conveyed water into the city are carried along the face of the tombs in the Syk, from which it appears that these edifices were erected before Petra had become so populous as to render this contrivance necessary for the supply of the inhabitants. Others again have been erected when the arts had reached their meridian, and are in the finest Grecian and Roman styles; and others as unquestionably were erected in the decline of the arts. *They shall build, but I will throw down,*[2] said the prophet. The different styles of building render it unquestionable, that the erection of many of the monuments of this city was posterior to the prophecy. But what existed before, and what has arisen since, now lie together in the same heap of ruin. The Edomites have built—Jehovah has thrown down.

Laborde says of some of the ruins, that the Arabs give them ridiculous names, and remarks, that besides the decay of time, one thing only is wanting to prove the utter fragility of our works, and that is, the ri-

[1] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 70. [2] Malachi, i, 4.

dicule of mankind![1] To this the ruins of Petra are at this day subjected. These immortal fabrics, which the ancient inhabitant beheld with pride, the savage wanderer of the desert regards with scorn. *I will make thee* DESPISED *among men. Every one who goeth by it shall* HISS *at all the plagues thereof.*[2]

To this city may we adapt the words of the prophet Isaiah regarding the king of Babylon. "All the *cities* of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house: but thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, as a carcase trodden under feet; thou art not joined with them in burial."[3]

Having lain so long neglected and wholly uninhabited, these magnificent ruins are now beginning to be covered with thorns and lichens, and other creeping and prickly plants. "The bramble," says Laborde, "overtops the summit of the edifice, extends itself over the cornices, and covers the base of the columns."[4] What a striking commentary on the words of the prophet:—*And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof.*[5]

We have already alluded to the deep silence that reigns over this forsaken site—a silence sometimes broken by the voice of those doleful creatures which the prophet foretold should possess it. "Silence," says Laborde, "reigns all around, save when the solitary owl now and then utters his plaintive cry."[6]

[1] Laborde, p. 156.
[2] Jeremiah, xlix, 15, 17.
[3] Isaiah, xiv, 18—20.
[4] Laborde, p. 177.
[5] Isaiah, xxxiv, 13.
[6] Laborde, p. 168.

It shall be a court for owls. The screech-owl also shall rest there and find for herself a place of rest.[1]

It was also foretold that these ruins should be haunted by serpents. Of the fulfilment of this prophecy we are able also to furnish evidence from the traveller. "It was truly a strange spectacle—a city filled with tombs, some scarcely begun, some finished, looking as new and as fresh as if they had just come from the hands of the sculptor, *while others seemed to be the abode of lizards.*"[2] *It shall be a habitation of dragons.*

The security which this situation offered was the reason, no doubt, that so singular a spot was selected as the site of a city. Defended on all sides by inaccessible precipices, it could be approached only by one path, and this entrance was so narrow, that it might easily be defended against a large army by a mere handful of men. No wonder that the inhabitants deemed their position impregnable, and that Petra said with another city—"I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow." But said the prophet—"Thy terribleness hath deceived thee:" and so indeed it did. She had seen the tide of conquest, by which other nations were overwhelmed, repelled from the foot of her dark mountains, but she could not bid defiance to the divine arm; and it was by that arm that she fell. Idumea was not overthrown in battle. Her ruin was accomplished by revolutions brought about by an overruling Providence amongst the nations, the effect of which was to annihilate her trade, and reduce her capital from opulence to poverty. And now posterity may pronounce over the

[1] Isaiah, xxxiv, 13, 14. [2] Laborde, p. 157.

ruins of Petra what the prophet foretold in the days of her pride—Thy terribleness deceived thee, oh thou that dwelt in the clefts of the rock. Thy nest was high as the eagle's; yet thence hast thou been brought down.

Before leaving this desolate site, let us advert to one or two of the lessons which it teaches. Here we behold what vast changes time silently works, and are reminded, in the most affecting manner, of the approach of that hour which will bring to an end all the most magnificent and durable of man's labours. The monuments of his power and the trophies of his art may long survive himself; but they are doomed at length to decay; and the hour cometh when they shall all be destroyed.

Here too we discover the true foundations of a nation's greatness—not science, however profound, nor commerce, however extensive. It is not the greatest military renown, nor the highest intellectual culture, which alone can give stability to a people. If these could save a nation, Petra would have stood to this hour. But Idumea forfeited by her wickedness the protection of Heaven, and then her knowledge of science and her skill in war could avail her nothing. The hand of Providence opened other channels for a trade, the benefits of which she had exclusively enjoyed. Her rapid national decline she found it impossible to arrest; and now her cities, plains, and mountains are an utter and eternal desolation.

But here we learn lessons of even higher import. The memorials of ruin which lie before us, what are they? These are the monuments of the truth of

the Divine word. Let us sit down amidst these ruins, and ponder on this great lesson. This was once the seat of a powerful kingdom. Here princes reigned, and mighty hosts were mustered. Here commerce poured her treasures and industry plied her labours. Here science taught and eloquence discoursed. What is it now?—a silent waste, a desolate solitude. But amid these ruins we may hear the same voice crying which the prophet heard of old—"All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever."[1]

[1] Isaiah, xl, 6, 8.

CHAPTER XV.

POLITICAL AND MORAL STATE OF EDOM.

Peculiar severity of the doom of Edom—Impression made by her desolate scenery—Singular position of cities—Remains of military and commercial establishments—Ameimé—The fallen condition of Edom illustrated, in the ruin of her commerce—The loss of her political influence—And the general poverty of her people—Natives characterised by ferocity, treachery, and cupidity—Extinction of her literature—Ignorance and superstition of her inhabitants—Edomites cut off—Concluding Remarks.

MANY a city has been overthrown, and many a land laid desolate, "for the wickedness of them that dwelt therein;" but no country was ever so fearfully visited as the nation and the land of Edom. With truth did the prophet foretell concerning it—"My sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold it shall come down upon Idumea and upon the people of my curse to judgment." Other cities, when overthrown, have had their ruins buried in the earth, and concealed from the eyes of men; but Petra has been denied a grave. Jehovah has turned her into a pillar of salt—an eternal monument of the truth and power of that word which foretold her doom.

Nor is the desolation of the country a less impressive proof of the truth of the Divine word. "I will make thee most desolate,"—*desolation and desolation.* How truly has this prediction been fulfilled. So complete is the desolation of Edom at this day

that the traveller would find it difficult to believe that the country had ever been inhabited, or cultivated since the creation, did not the voice of all history remind him, that it was once the dwelling of a powerful people, and could boast anciently of a salubrious climate, and a soil not infertile. Nothing in Edom is diminutive; every thing is on a grand scale: even her ruin is magnificent. Here the country rises into vast chains of naked mountains, whose pointed summits tower into the air. There it sinks into extensive plains, which are prolonged till they meet the sky, but without a single stream to cool their sands, and scarcely a tree or speck of verdure to relieve the eye. It is difficult indeed merely by extracts to convey a proper idea of the extent and even the grandeur of the desolation of Edom: this can be done only by following the traveller throughout his whole course, and observing how often he pauses to express the feelings of awe and astonishment with which he gazed on her gloomy and boundless wastes. Such incidental notices as the following may be taken as an example. "The arid desert," says Laborde, "the naked mountains: a broiling sun: our little troop moving through that boundless solitude: and our shouts which, enthusiastic as they were, made scarcely any impression on the surrounding silence, associated strangely together."[1] "We left this place in the afternoon," says he of Wady Gharendel.[2] The valley, it will be remembered, by which Burck-

[1] Laborde, p. 119.

[2] Not to be confounded (as the translator of Laborde has done) with the Gharendel on the west side of the peninsula of Sinai, the supposed Elim of Scripture, at which the Israelites found "twelve wells of water and three score and ten palm trees."—Exodus, xv, 27.

hardt passed out into that of Araba, in his journey through the mountains of Seir, and where Laborde and his party halted in their march up the same valley, "and for some hours travelled through a bleak wilderness. Night fell upon this miserable looking country, as if to veil its desolation, when we halted."[1]

A very singular passage through the eastern mountains of the peninsula of Sinai, not indeed in Edom, but not far from its borders, he thus describes. "The route on which we now entered was the most singular that the imagination can picture. The valley, shut in within a width of about fifty paces by masses of granite, of from a thousand to twelve hundred feet in height, which often rose like perpendicular walls even to their very tops, exhibited the appearance of a Cyclopean street, the ravines branching out from which, on each side, seemed to be adjoining streets, all belonging to the same ancient and abandoned town."

"The extraordinary shapes and immensity of the masses accumulated on the right and left were calculated to terrify and almost overwhelm the mind; an effect which was not a little augmented by the enormous fissures that occurred here and there, presenting huge fragments which had tumbled from the summit of the mountain. The silence prevailing all around us was that of the grave: the wind was unheard amidst these almost subterraneous passages, the sun touched with his golden hues only the most elevated points, and the tranquillity of the place would have been undisturbed had not every step and every sound of our voices been re-echoed from the steeps on each side as we pursued our way."[2] This extraordinary

[1] Laborde, p. 142.

[2] Laborde, pp. 89, 90.

passage leads by a continued, but gentle declivity, to the shore of the eastern branch of the Red sea, amidst the palm trees of Dahab.[1]

These and a great many more incidental allusions to the desolate character of the scenery of this land are scattered through the pages of this and of every traveller who has visited Edom: and certainly they justify, in the most ample manner, the strong figurative terms in which the prophets, in some passages, foretold its destruction.

In the former lecture we gave an ample description of the capital of Edom;—her former grandeur and present ruin. But the skill and enterprise of the Idumeans were by no means confined to the capital, although no doubt Petra was the most marvellous effort of their art. Towns were planted throughout the country, in situations which would have appeared to us wholly unsuitable. Indeed, when we survey their site, we are tempted to think that the chief motive which guided the Idumeans in the selection of such spots was the opportunities they offered to art, of displaying her triumphs over the obstacles of Nature. All the monuments which remain in Edom bear marks of having been executed with great and unwearied industry. Strong walls were thrown across the openings of the valleys amongst the mountains, and the natural ravines were constructed into reservoirs, where the water might collect during the rainy season.[2] Channels were carried along the mountain

[1] This is conjectured by Burckhardt to be the Dizahab mentioned in Deut. i, 1. It is not improbable that the host of the Israelites, in some of their journeys, may have defiled through the same passage.

[2] Laborde, pp. 208, 209.

sides from these vast but artificial fountains: and thus provision was made for the supply of the towns, and the irrigation of the fields and valleys during the heat of summer. As an instance of this we may mention, that the town of Ameimé, which was built on the plain at the eastern base of the mountains of Seir, on the road from Petra to Aila, was supplied with water from the wells of Gana: the aquedµct still remains and is upwards of nine miles in length. Great skill was necessary to conduct the water to so great a distance, over an uneven surface.[1] The same skill and labour were expended in the irrigation of the terraces on the sides of the hills, and this being effected in the manner we have already described, the richest vegetation rose under the warm sun of Arabia. While the valleys, which were beautifully green, abounded with fig-trees, myrtles, and oleanders, the hills were shaded with the palm, or covered with the vine.

Works of defence also were constructed by the Idumeans. Of these the ruins in some instances remain. The entrances into their country were guarded by forts; and the narrow mountain passes leading to the capital were defended in the same manner.[2] The great road from Petra to the Red sea was guarded by strong and numerous fortifications. This road runs along a plain which, toward its southern extremity, narrows into a valley, the Wady Jetoum. At this part of the range of Seir the chalk and limestone rocks have disappeared, and the mountains display immense naked masses of basalt and granite. A strong wall enclosed this valley in former times, leaving only a narrow passage, which might be easily

[1] Laborde, p. 206. [2] Laborde, p. 142.

defended. Since the country was abandoned, the winter torrents have enlarged the opening, but part of the wall still remains. Here the traveller is sometimes overtaken by the simoom. The sky assumes a dull grey colour, the sun appears as through a thick fog, the hot wind begins to blow, and the traveller is involved in clouds of burning sand. In such situations, however, this storm is not so dangerous as when it overtakes the traveller on the open plain; in narrow valleys like the Wady Jetoum it is obvious that those immense sand-swells cannot take place, beneath which whole caravans are sometimes lost.[1]

The great Idumean trade gave rise to numerous establishments, which were absolutely necessary for its accommodation and defence; the remains of these erections are still to be traced by the traveller in Edom. Laborde speaks of a variety of extensive works which are found at intervals along the borders of the great desert valley of Araba. The ruins which the traveller observed are those doubtless of the warehouses and towns which arose out of the rich traffic of which that valley was the channel from the days of Solomon till a period considerably posterior to the commencement of the Christian era.

It is well known that, in the latter days of the Roman empire, a great public road ran from Jerusalem, by Hebron, to Akaba on the Red sea—the Eloth, or Ezion-geber, of Scripture; indeed it is probable that this route existed from the days of Solomon, and was the same by which the treasures of Ophir were conveyed by the servants of that monarch to his warehouses in the cities of Judah. History

[1] Laborde, p. 212.

speaks of numerous towns existing along this line, and no sooner does the traveller of the present day leave the valley of Araba for the purpose of proceeding by the ancient route to Jerusalem than he discovers the remains of these establishments at short intervals. Stephens, who passed along this road, noticed these sites, but he has given no markings of distance, and circumstances prevented him from dismounting even to examine them, so that his account of these interesting ruins is somewhat unsatisfactory. He speaks of them as having the appearance of third or fourth-rate towns — nor was there any thing among their remains which indicated that they had ever possessed any architectural or monumental beauty: they appear to have existed solely for the commerce out of which they arose. While the traveller continues in the Idumean desert, it is seldom that he meets a single human being near these ruins; but, as he approaches the hills of Hebron, he finds the country occupied with shepherds, who have pulled down the buildings, in many instances, to erect rude fences around the caves which form their place of habitation. Although these ruins have not been minutely examined, yet their existence, which is now perfectly ascertained, corroborates the testimony of history regarding the traffic which once existed along this line, and the wealthy and populous towns to which it gave rise.[1]

But the greatest monument at present existing in connection with the now extinct trade of Idumea, is the city of Ameimé on the plain east of the range of Seir. This city, which is now in ruins, stood on

[1] Laborde, p. 194; Stephens, vol. ii, pp. 123—135.

the great eastern route, and appears to have been built for the sole purpose of supplying the caravans with water. The ruins exhibit no traces of architectural splendour; Ameimé appears to have been literally a city of cisterns, which were constructed with great skill and carefully lined with cement. These cisterns were filled with the water of the wells of Gana, conveyed by the aqueduct of which we have already spoken; and sometimes a nearer supply appears to have been found in the winter torrents of Mount Seir. The appearance of these vaults and cisterns, reminding, as they do, the traveller of the element of water, in the midst of sands, the very *sight* of which is enough to create the feeling of thirst, is fitted to convey no mean idea of the skill, energy, and perseverance of the people which established this halting place.[1]

The prophecies which remain to be illustrated regarding Edom refer to the political state of the country, and the character and habits of its people. These predictions have been not less exactly fulfilled than those which foretold the desolation of its soil, and the fall of its capital. "Lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men."[2] To feel the full import of the prophet's words, we must consider the glory which then attached to the name of Edom, and the respect which was then paid her by the neighbouring nations. When the prediction was uttered Idumea held, not indeed the *first rank*, but a most honourable place, amongst the nations of the earth. Many causes combined to exalt her importance and influence far

[1] Laborde, pp. 206—208. [2] Jeremiah, xlix, 15.

beyond any thing to which she was entitled to lay claim on the ground of her limited territorial extent. The impregnable position of her capital, which some of the Roman generals even were obliged to respect —the numbers and warlike character of her people; and their fame for wisdom, all conspired to heighten her. influence: but the circumstance which contributed mainly to the glory of Edom was her vast commerce. To Petra all the caravans from Arabia and India directed their march. Here they all met. And from this point their wares were sent forth to circulate along the shores of the Mediterranean, and enrich the nations of Asia Minor, Europe, and Africa. Idumea, at any moment, could arrest this magnificent stream of wealth—could bar the doors of the East against the nations of the West. The people which had power to do so were not likely to be despised. But, said the prophet, "I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men." And consider how low Edom has now been brought; how greatly she is now despised. There is not, at this day, one nation on the face of the earth dependent for one article of use on HER who once had power over all the treasures of India and Arabia; and could open and shut them at her pleasure. Commerce is now extinct in that land; Jehovah has cut off from it him that passeth out, and him that returneth.

The gum which exudes from the Talh-tree is the only article in which any sort of trade is carried on at present in Edom. This shrub grows abundantly in the desert, and its produce, being gathered by the natives and carried to Cairo, where it is disposed of, forms almost the sole subsistence of several tribes.

To the wealth arising from this miserable remnant of their ancient traffic, the Idumeans are able to add a little by the plunder of chance parties of merchants or pilgrims, and the heavy dues which are yearly exacted for the safe-conduct of the caravans to Mecca. In former ages the inhabitants of this land were wont to supply the world with luxuries, but now such are the miserable sources from which their precarious subsistence is derived.

Of political influence Edom has been entirely divested. True, that great family, of which those who now possess Edom are the eldest branch, still retain their freedom. When their progenitor was born it was said, "he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren," and to this hour the proper territory of the Ishmaelites has never been violated by the arms of conquest. The eagles of Rome halted on its frontier; the flag of Britain floats on its southern extremity; but no permanent inroad has ever been made into their country; and the Arab of the present day enjoys the same wild freedom in which his father Ishmael lived. Still, although they have retained their independence, they possess no power which can enable them to influence, in any degree, the condition of other nations; and least of all does such an influence belong to the Arabs who inhabit Edom. At the time that her fall was foretold, Idumea was governed by her own princes. But there is no monarch in Edom now. They call the nobles to the kingdom, but none are there; all her princes are nothing; and the palaces they once occupied are now tenanted by unclean and hateful animals. Which of the nations at this day would either dread her hostility, or court

her favour; or regard the inhabitants of Edom with any other feelings but those of pity and contempt, as rude, ignorant, and lawless savages, who roam over fields which they have not industry to cultivate, and encamp amid ruins which their skill does not enable them to rebuild? When her fall was pronounced, Edom was covered with magnificent cities; but the only dwellings in that land at this day are the mud huts which the peasants erect in the mountains of Shera, or the mean and wretched tents which the Bedouins raise in the desert as a protection from the burning sun. So entirely has Edom been divested of every thing like political influence, and so greatly is she despised even by those under whose government she exists nominally, that when the party of MacMichael applied at Constantinople for a passport to visit Petra, the authorities there denied that there was such a place within the dominions of the Sultan.

Nor is it among civilized nations only that Edom has become small, and is despised. Her extreme poverty has rendered her a proverb even amongst the tribes of the desert. The natives of Idumea are in a far more wretched condition than their brethren who live in Ammon and Moab. It is seldom that they are able to feed numerous flocks, and they are most commonly destitute of those few comforts which a Bedouin accounts essential, and which are found generally in the tent of every Arab. Burckhardt tells us that had he not taken care to provide himself with whatever he judged to be needful for his journey before entering Edom, the natives in most cases would have been unable to have supplied him with any better provision than dry bread; in

some encampments he could not even procure milk, which is almost never awanting amongst the Arabs. He met a tribe whose whole stock of camels amounted only to six; while it is no uncommon thing for a respectable tribe to possess many hundreds of these useful animals. He met another tribe in the deserts adjoining Edom so poor that they had no tents, and their only shelter from the scorching heat of the sun and the heavy dews of night (for in that land the dews are still abundant) was a sort of booth formed of the branches of the talh-tree.[1] Such is the miserable state to which the natives of Idumea have been reduced. What a contrast does the present condition of Edom form to its former power and grandeur. A greater change it is scarcely possible for the imagination to conceive. Her princes cut off; her cities and palaces demolished; her trade brought to an end. Stript of all that could give her influence, or procure her respect; verily, Edom is "small among the heathen, and despised among men."

"They shall call them the border of wickedness."[2] How striking has been the fulfilment of this prophecy! Although the prophet had lived in our day, he could not have chosen a term better fitted to express the evil renown which that land has acquired from the ferocity of its inhabitants. The Arab of the neighbouring countries, as well as the traveller from a distant land, regard it as "the border of wickedness," into which it is not safe to venture, unless protected by a powerful escort. "On the very borders of Edom," says Stephens, "I noticed a change for the worse in

[1] Burckhardt, p. 446. [2] Malachi, i, 4.

the appearance of the Bedouins. They were by far the wildest and fiercest-looking of all I had yet seen; with complexions bronzed and burnt to blackness; dark eyes, glowing with a fire approaching to ferocity."[1] The Arab races in general have a strong reluctance to shed blood: in the incursions which are often made by one tribe into the territory of another, for the purpose of plunder, it is rare indeed that any lives are lost. But the races who inhabit Edom, and especially those who dwell near the site of Petra, do not share in this reluctance, at least to the same degree with the other tribes. It is only a few years since a large company of pilgrims were massacred in cold blood by the peasants of Wady Mousa, in the gloomy pass which leads to Petra. MacMichael and his party were shown the spot where they perished: and the remembrance of so tragical an event was not fitted by any means to diminish the horrors of a pass, in itself sufficiently terrible. Every traveller speaks of the inhabitants of Idumea as treacherous, cruel, dishonest. The neighbouring tribes regard them with terror: carefully avoid the districts they frequent; and can scarcely be induced by the largest bribe to act as guides through their territories. MacMichael and his party had the greatest difficulty in obtaining guides to conduct them into Edom. They made the large offer of five hundred piastres, "but," says MacMichael, "this proposal they rejected, saying, that not five thousand piastres should induce them to undertake so perilous an expedition," adding, "that the Arabs of that country were of the most savage char-

[1] Stephens, vol. ii, p. 33.

acter."[1] The account which Laborde gives of the manner in which his guides talked of the natives of that land agrees exactly with the testimony of MacMichael. When the former questioned them regarding the character of the Arabs who inhabit Wady Mousa, "it was obvious," says he, "that, under an air of affected contempt, they really felt a strong apprehension of the evil disposition of that people."[2] This proves the truth of two prophecies, which appear at first sight irreconcilable; that the natives of this land should at the same time be despised and dreaded —despised for their poverty, and dreaded for their wickedness.

Edom at this day is almost constantly the scene of petty warfare. The country, speaking generally, is posessed by two tribes; the Beni-Saker, and the Howeytat. The Beni-Saker inhabit the eastern parts of Idumea, and are reputed the most formidable and merciless of all the Arabs. The Howeyetat inhabit the mountains of Shera, and the plains on the west: cupidity and treachery are their distinguishing characteristics. Burckhardt calls them dexterous thieves, and says that their evil propensities have rendered them formidable to all their neighbours. A few years before he visited them they had robbed the Egyptian caravan. Peace is never of long continuance between these two tribes. The one will often undertake an expedition of twenty days to surprise and attack the tents of the other. The encampment in which the traveller lodged had been attacked during the winter preceding his visit by the Beni-Saker, and in one night twelve hundred camels were driven off. This

[1] MacMichael, p. 202. [2] Laborde, p. 132.

reminds us of a calamity which befel an inhabitant of the same land in an early age, "while he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, the Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away."[1]

Cupidity is another vice which stains the character of the inhabitant of Edom. On the concurrent testimony of every traveller, their avatice is truly insatiable. "One might expect," says Stephens, "to find these children of Nature free from the reproach of civilized life, the love of gold. But, fellow-citizens and fellow-worshippers of Mammon, hold up your heads; this reproach must not be confined to you. I never saw anything like the expression of face with which a Bedouin looks upon silver and gold. When he asks for bucksheesh and receives the glittering metal, his eyes sparkle with wild delight, his fingers clutch it with eager rapacity, and he skulks away like the miser to count it over alone and hide it from all eyes."[2] In the desert Burckhardt was stript of every thing of any value about him; and of many things which were of no value; not indeed by main force, for, deeming him an Arab, they dreaded the anger of his tribe, but in the way of proposed exchanges with the chiefs, which the traveller had not the power to decline. The saddle on which he rode was coveted, and taken from him; and one of much inferior value substituted in its room. To quote his own words, "I was reduced to that state which alone can ensure tranquillity to the traveller in the desert, having nothing with me that could attract the notice, or excite the cupidity of the Bedouins; my clothes and

[1] Job, i, 17. [2] Stephens, vol. ii, pp. 154, 155.

linen were torn to rags; a dirty keffye, or yellow handkerchief, covered my head: my leathern girdle and shoes had long been exchanged, by way of present, against similar articles of an inferior kind, so that those I now wore were of the very worst sort. Having thus nothing more to give, I expected to be freed from all further demands: but I was mistaken." Some linen rags, torn from his shirt, were wound round his ancles, which his stirrup-irons had wounded; and as personal beauty is studied by the sex in the depth of the Arabian desert, as well as in the most civilized city of Europe, these rags were coveted by the Arab ladies for the purpose of making a berkoa or face veil; in vain he represented that they were essential to him in the wounded state of his ancles; they were begged with such importunity that he was obliged to part with them; the only retaliation in which he allowed himself being that he "gave the rags to an ugly old woman, to the no slight disappointment of the young ones."[1]

Such are the evil dispositions of the modern Idumeans—dreaded for their cruelty, and detested for their treachery and dishonesty. Within their territories the traveller is safe from violence only when he is strongly armed, and secure against robbery when he has nothing to lose. It is fair to mention, however, that Laborde found an Arab of Idumea, whom he took to be warm-hearted, and free from the vices which appear indigenous to the soil. Hussein by name; his guide through Edom, and a chief of great influence. "He wept on leaving me," says he, "and made me promise that I would again come

[1] Burckhardt, p. 438.

to eat his dates, and drink his milk under his tent. He said, that God was great, that perhaps some day I might be unfortunate, and an exile from my country, and that then I should remember Hussein: he added, that he would have always for me, in the Wady, a tent to sleep in; goats to supply me with food, and dromedaries to take me to see the *old stones*."[1] Hussein was put to death some years ago, by the Pacha of Egypt. His character we have reason to believe did not differ essentially from that of his people. The money which Laborde scattered so profusely around him, tended, we suspect, to produce this tenderness of heart:[2] for the Arabs of that land, to this day, speak in the figurative style of the East, of the golden shower in which that traveller arrived.

But the greatest of all the changes which Edom has undergone remains to be told. The conversion of a fertile country into an arid desert, and the transformation of a city of matchless splendour into naked ruins, is a change sufficiently affecting; but, beyond all question, it is not once to be named in comparison with the melancholy eclipse which has there passed upon the human mind.

From the height of science and refinement, the natives of this land have descended into the lowest depth of ignorance and barbarism. But, in this woful reverse we behold the words of the prophet verified. "Concerning Edom, thus saith the Lord of Hosts,

[1] Laborde, p. 258.

[2] The El Alouins made similar protestations to Mr. Stephens on parting—not, however, till that traveller had assured them that he would never send any of his friends to visit their country without their being well supplied with money.

Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished?"[1] This prophecy breathes an air of surprise, which is at once natural and beautiful, when we take into account the improbability of the fact to which it refers, but however improbable the prophets were commissioned to announce that it should certainly be realised: accordingly, in the mouth of Obadiah, whose whole prophecy relates to Edom, the strains of surprise are changed into those of denunciation:—"Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?"[2] Thus it was repeatedly and distinctly foretold, that wisdom, and counsel, and understanding should perish from the land of Edom; and that her inhabitants should, in after ages, be as noted for their ignorance as they had in past times been eminent for wisdom. Let us enquire whether the prophecy has been fulfilled.

Where is the scholar whose imagination warms not at the mention of Greece and Italy? But the fame of the most classic fields in Europe is but of yesterday, compared with the immemorial renown of Edom. There wisdom made her first abode. In the morning of the world science and art established their throne on the plains of Teman, and amid the mountains of Seir; and from these mountains, now so dark and barren, that light first shone forth, by which the nations of the earth were irradiated. We have already attempted to show that the early records of the most ancient nations favour the conclusion that the inhabitants of Edom were the first to

[1] Jeremiah, xlix, 7. [2] Obadiah, 8.

navigate the deep, to study the stars, to measure the great cycles of time, to invent letters, and to unite distant countries by the traffic which they carried on between them. Of the poetry of this land one noble fragment remains, beyond all question the finest which the world contains. The book of Job is of great value as an authentic record of the manners of society at that early age, the advance of the sciences, and the perfection which the arts had reached, in what was then the most enlightened country of the world; but as a piece of poetry it is wholly unrivalled. Who has not melted over the calamities which overwhelmed the "perfect" and the "upright man"? Who has not kindled at the eloquence of Eliphaz, or listened with reverence to the solemn discourse of Elihu, or been awed and elevated, instructed and ravished by turns, as he perused its delineations, now of innocence fallen into adversity and suffering injurious suspicion; and anon of the prosperous transgressor, pursuing his brilliant but brief career, spreading forth like the bay-tree, but perishing as the rush, which "withereth before any other herb"? What can surpass the simple yet singular beauty of its pictures, the solemn grandeur of its style, whether it discourses of the tender herb of the field or the constellations of the sky—of the grasshopper of the valley or the behemoth of the seas, or reveals the unapproachable and unspeakable majesty of Him who made the seven stars and Orion?

But alas! wisdom is no more in Teman—understanding has perished from the mount of Esau. A long night has overspread that land, where four thousand years ago the morning dawned so auspi-

ciously. The minds of the natives of Edom are wholly uninformed by any knowledge, human or divine. Of science they know not even the rudiments—of the arts they are entirely ignorant—of letters they have no knowledge. The only book which they ever saw—or to speak more correctly, which they ever heard of—is the Koran; all the childish fables and manifest absurdities of which, so far as they are known by them, they willingly believe.

It were endless to narrate all the instances which might be adduced of the ignorance and superstition of this people. In the powers of magic they are firm believers; and this forms one of the greatest obstacles to the progress of discovery. Should the traveller, to aid his memory, take a few hasty notes of any building or ruin, the ignorant Bedouin does not doubt that he is performing some secret charm, for the purpose of despoiling the place of the rich hoards buried there by its former owner. All the time Burckhardt was in the desert, he carefully concealed his compass from the natives, and took his bearings under his Arabian cloak. Had the instrument been seen, it would have procured for its owner the character of a necromancer—a circumstance which would have been fatal to the object of his journey.

To these simple and ignorant wanderers, the works of past ages appear to owe their origin to supernatural power. The Bedouin, feeling that his own strength and skill would be altogether inadequate to the erection of similar structures, believes that such efforts are beyond the power of mortals, and that genii, and not men, were the authors of these

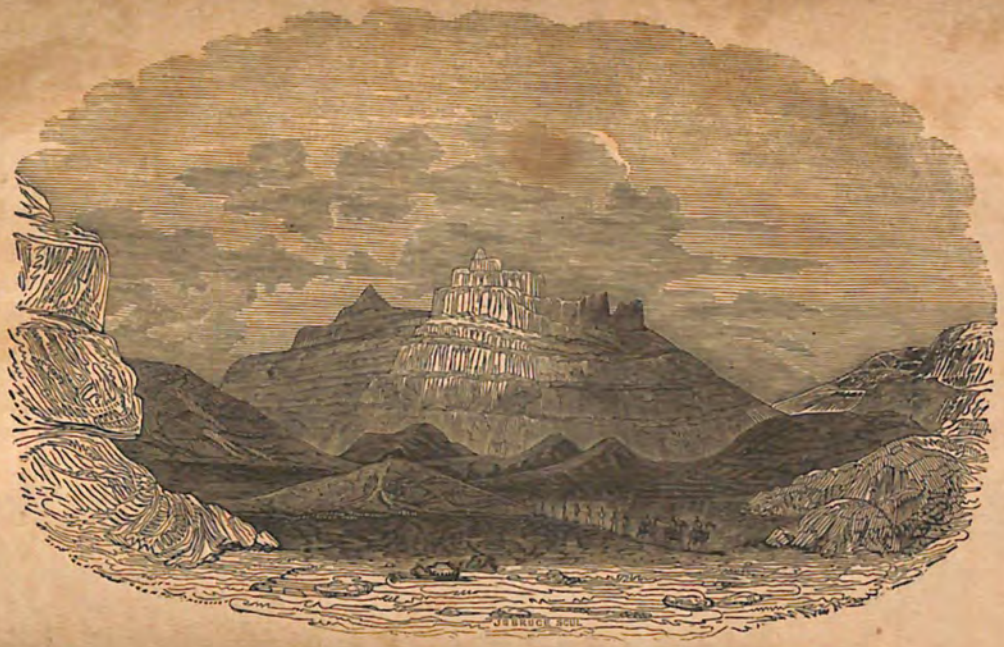
stupendous fabrics. The desert, according to the Bedouin faith, is peopled with demons, who, with watchful jealousy, never neglect an opportunity of doing the human race an injury. Such as loiter behind the caravan become the prey of these invisible foes. This fable receives some countenance from the frequent loss of travellers: their strength not enabling them to keep pace with their companions, they fall behind, and being overtaken by Bedouin robbers, are stripped and left to perish.

Their ignorance on all matters beyond those with which they are daily conversant in the desert is almost incredible. When the great caravan of 1757, consisting of upwards of twenty thousand camel loads, was plundered, the Bedouins found themselves in possession of innumerable articles of which they were utterly unable to discover the use, or to estimate the value. The desert was filled for the time with the richest stuffs of India and Persia, and the rarest products of Arabia. It seemed as if the ancient Nabathean commerce had been suddenly revived: but these costly articles, having no price in the eyes of barbarians, were given away for a few piastres. Amongst the booty allotted to one individual were several bags of fine pearls. Their ignorant and famished possessor, supposing them to be dhourra, had them boiled for eating, but finding that they did not soften, he was on the point of throwing them away, when a citizen of Gaza offered him in exchange for them a red bonnet of faz.

It were a matter of comparatively little importance, that the page of history, with all its lessons of experience, should be closed to the Arab, and that

his mind should never be irradiated by the light of modern science, were his heart purified or his understanding enlarged by the great truths of Revelation. But of these the Bedouin lives and dies in ignorance. Even the faith of the prophet has but small influence in the desert. The heart of the Arab it never reaches; for its moral precepts and its future hopes are unknown to him; and all that it accomplishes is to train him to the observance of a few frivolous rites. When the orb of the sun is seen emerging above the sands of the desert, the Bedouin spreads his carpet on the ground, and prostrating himself with his face towards the great temple at Mecca, he pours forth a brief prayer. A similar form is repeated at evening. The same words are always employed, and the efficacy of the prayer depends on the proper attitude being assumed while the person is employed in offering it. Were it not for the observance of this ceremony, it would not be easy to discover whether the Bedouin were a believer in any creed, or a worshipper of any deity. On all subjects connected with religion, their ideas are singularly vague. At the foot of mount Hor Mr. Stephens had a stiff argument with an Arab, who persisted in affirming that Aaron was a mussulman, and that he lived after Mahomet.[1] The encounter

[1] Their superstition Burckhardt had the address to render subservient to the purposes of discovery. It is an Arab custom to sacrifice a goat at the tomb of Aaron. The traveller finding that he could by no means be allowed to enter Wady Mousa, feigned a vow to do sacrifice to the saint, and provided himself with a goat. His guide, dreading the wrath of Haroun (Aaron,) forbore further resistance. On their way to mount Hor, they passed through and explored the ruins of the celebrated valley of Moses—the first time these ruins were ever seen by a European. They ascended the mountain at the hour of sunset, and having



AARON'S TOMB—MOUNT HOR.

of Mr. Wolff with this people at the foot of the presumed mount Sinai was still more singular. Having visited the convent of St. Catharine in 1821, he ascended the mountain on which it is built. The Arabs, who for some time before had besieged the convent for bread, watched the return of the traveller, and seized his person, in order to induce the monks to comply with their demands.[1] They expatiated to the missionary on the wickedness of the monks, whom they accused of being the occasion of the sterility of their deserts. They told him that these persons were in possession of the book of Moses, and that whenever they brought it forth and held it towards heaven praying for rain, the desert was instantly refreshed with showers; but that their evil dispositions would not allow them to confer so great a kindness, that they kept the book constantly buried in the earth, and in consequence the heavens were always closed. The missionary reminded them that God was the God of the Arabs as well as of the Greeks, and that they ought themselves to pray to the "Father of the rain," who

[1] come in sight of the tomb, Burckhardt proceeded to kill the goat, which the Arab believed was offered to Haroun, but which the traveller designed to dress for supper. "While I was in the act of slaying the animal, my guide exclaimed aloud—'O Haroun, look upon us! it is for you we slaughter this victim. O Haroun, protect us and forgive us! O Haroun, be content with our good intentions, for it is but a lean goat.'"—Burckhardt. p. 430. As this is the last time we shall have occasion to refer to the authority of Burckhardt, we may here be permitted to remark, that no one can peruse his travels without *liking* the man, his candour and good sense are so apparent; and Burckhardt, we believe, possessed even higher qualities. He sleeps at Cairo in the great burial-place, commencing at the gate of victory, which opens to the desert; but having no distinguishing mark, one seeks in vain for his grave amidst those of thousands and tens of thousands of mussulmans who lie buried around.

would answer their prayers by sending down showers. "God," said they, "never minds the prayer of an Arab."[1] Thus, instead of the sublime conceptions which the natives of this land entertained anciently of the Almighty, and which are so beautifully embodied in the only authentic composition connected with Edom which is now extant, we find amongst her present inhabitants notions truly mean and narrow, and altogether unworthy of the great and awful Being to whom they are applied. The sun of Edom is set, and her unhappy children are covered with a night of seven-fold darkness.

But those who now dwell in Edom are not her *ancient* children. In what region of the earth shall we seek for them—the race of Esau is at this day utterly extinct. *There shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau.*[2] After many national reverses the Jews still exist as a people, in a state of dispersion no doubt, but waiting the day which shall gather them to their own land, to inherit the blessings which their covenant God shall yet confer upon them; but those who long and zealously laboured to extirpate them, have perished from the earth, and left behind the land they occupied smitten and blighted by the curse, as a testimony of God's displeasure against their wickedness. Implacable hatred of the chosen people was the sin of Edom; and as the punishment of this sin, the prophets foretold the utter ruin of their country and race; and this denunciation we now behold awfully verified. "Thou shouldest not," says the prophet,

[1] Wolff's Journal. Jewish Expositor, vol. vii, p. 249.
[2] Obadiah, 18.

reproving the unseemly and unnatural satisfaction with which they witnessed the calamities of their brethren the Israelites,—"Thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity."[1] "Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, therefore as I live, saith the Lord God, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee."[2]

We have now gone over this field, so pregnant with evidence to the truth of prophecy; and the interest which in this respect attaches to Edom is equal, if not superior, to that of any other country. We have considered the subject in the three branches into which it naturally resolves itself. We turned our attention, in the first place, to the sterility of the soil of this country—a sterility so great, that Edom is pre-eminent in this respect among the ruined countries on the Jordan. And so far, obviously, is it beyond the power of man to recall this desolation, that this country, as the prophets foretold, must lie waste for ever. And while the dark mountains and the naked plains of this land remain, the prophets of Israel shall not want witnesses of their truth. Our attention was chiefly confined, in

[1] Obadiah, 12, 13. [2] Ezekiel, xxxv, 5, 6.

the second place, to the wondrous ruins which fill the valley of Wady Mousa, so singular in their preservation, so beautiful in their architecture, and so impressive as monuments of the complete fulfilment of the prophecy upon that city which, in former ages dwelt here, like the eagle, in the clefts of the rock. In the last place, we have endeavoured to describe the ignorance, the wretchedness, and the contempt into which the natives of this once illustrious land have fallen. Nor can we depart from the land of Edom, without expressing once more, and in fine, our admiration of the truth, accuracy, and completeness of the picture of this country as it presently exists, contained in the pages of Isaiah. Many travellers have visited Edom, and given minute, faithful, and eloquent descriptions of it: but in all these respects the traveller is surpassed by the prophet. The one wrote with the scene before him—the fallen temple—the ruined city—the wasted field—the awful silence of a land from which man has fled—every emblem, in fine, of desolation was present, to inspire the mind of the traveller, and to communicate force as well as accuracy to his description. And yet the prophet, though writing at the distance of two thousand years, has painted the then *future* but now *present* aspect of Edom with a colouring not less vivid, and a detail not less minute and accurate. What others have required volumes to communicate, Isaiah has brought within the compass of a single page, and described with all the pathos of oriental poetry.

CHAPTER XVI.

FUTURE PROSPECTS OF JUDEA AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES.

Scriptures predict their physical restoration—The literal and national return of the Jews—Likelihood of these prophecies being fulfilled shown—From the capabilities of these countries, their present political state, and the general desire of the Jews to return to them—Question regarding Turkey—Present state of its army, navy, schools, workshops, people—Impossibility of maintaining it—Question regarding its settlement—Disjunction of Syria from the Ottoman Empire—Duty of England—Lesson taught by the whole subject.

ALTHOUGH we have but scanty materials for determining the question, we cannot refrain from asking, What shall be the *future* history of these illustrious lands? Shall order ever be re-established in them? Shall they ever again be visited and blessed with knowledge and religion? or must they remain to the end of time in the hands of the barbarians by whom they are now possessed—the scene of divine judgments, and of man's tyranny, devastation, and crime? This is impossible. The capabilities of their soil and climate, which are now beginning to be understood and appreciated by the nations of the West, and the clear intimations given regarding them in the Scriptures of truth, leave us in no doubt that important and beneficial changes are awaiting them. The manner in which these changes may be

brought about it is impossible to determine, but we feel assured that the history of these countries is not yet closed; that the concluding acts of Providence shall take place on the same stage on which the great drama of the world was opened; and that the last and brightest rays of civilisation, freedom, and religion shall shine forth and linger on the spot where they first arose.

In the short inquiry in relation to the future fortunes of these regions on which we are now entering, we shall be guided mainly, First, by what is foretold regarding them in the Word of God; Second, by what we are warranted to expect on the score of their own capabilities; and, Third, by what we may be able to prognosticate from the direction which human affairs are now taking, and especially from the course which the nations of Europe, influenced by a regard to their own interests, are likely to adopt in reference to them.

The divine Word, in numerous and unambiguous passages, predicts the *physical* and *moral* restoration of these countries. The intimations of prophecy on this head resolve themselves into two leading declarations, which respect especially the territory inhabited of old by the Israelites—that its former fertility shall revive, and that it shall again be planted with its ancient people—events which, we are given to understand, shall be contemporaneous, or nearly so. The time when these events shall take place is another question, and to be determined on other grounds, and one with which we have here nothing to do; all we are required at present to establish is, that prophecy really announces these changes in reference

to this venerable land—that the beauty of its hills and valleys shall return, and that its soil shall yet be pressed by the feet of its long expatriated children.

To bring forward and consider every passage relating to the point in question which is to be found in the prophets would require more space than we can now allot to the subject; but what could be more explicit as regards the restoration of the *country* of Judea than the following prophecy of Ezekiel? "Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains and to the hills, to the rivers and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I have spoken in my jealousy, and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen: Therefore thus saith the Lord God, I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame. But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded: and I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men. .....Thus saith the Lord God, In the day that

I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, and desolate, and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited."[1] Equally clear and beautiful is the prophecy of Amos. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God."[2]

With regard to the terms of these prophecies, it is necessary to remark that they are to be taken in their literal meaning, and not in any symbolical sense; they predict simply the physical restoration of the country, and not, as some have affirmed, a moral and spiritual change to be wrought upon the nation of the Jews. The following considerations make this obvious and undoubted. They are terms of the same kind with those which are employed to describe the devastation of the country. But further these changes are represented as consequent on the effusion of the Spirit; and if we should view the terms in which these changes are described as symbolical

[1] Ezekiel, xxxvi, 6—13, 33—35. [2] Amos, ix, 13—15.

of spiritual blessings, then we must understand the prophets as intimating, that in the latter days spiritual blessings are to be consequent upon the effusion of spiritual blessings; which is absurd. Moreover, a contrast is stated between the countries of Edom and Judea in this very point, that while the former should be always desolate, the latter should be inhabited.[1] We must necessarily understad the terms of the contrast as literal on the side of Edom, for we cannot predicate *spiritual* barrenness of the soil of a country, and unless the terms on the other side are interpreted literally also, there is no contrast between the two countries.

The physical restoration of Judea is not more clearly predicted than is its future occupation by its ancient people. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth."[2] "Therefore, behold the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers."[3] "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold,

[1] Joel, iii, 19, 20. [2] Isaiah, xi, 11, 12. [3] Jer. xvi, 14, 15.

I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel."[1] "I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off. And I will sow them among the people; and they shall remember me in far countries; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them."[2] These passages refer to a far wider dispersion than any immediately consequent on the Babylonish captivity; they speak of the return of the whole body of the Jews, and not simply of the house of Judah; and they import that their settlement in the land of Israel was to be final, they were "no more" to be "pulled up out of their land." These conditions were not fulfilled in their return from Babylon, and thus, we are obliged to view the prophecy as referring to some future and glorious event, which shall close a more prolonged period of suffering than any that was ever known to their fathers, and shall assemble these outcasts of eighteen centuries, and denizens of every land, once more, and for the last time, on the mountains of Israel.

The application of the prophecies we have quoted to the *literal* return of the Jews, one would think, is obvious enough; yet it has been called in question. There are some who view these predictions as figurative throughout; as implying, not the actual return of

[1] Ezekiel, xxxvii, 21, 22. [2] Zechariah, x, 6, 9, 10.

the Jews to the land of Canaan, but simply their conversion to the faith of Christ, and their restoration to the church of God. There are two considerations which satisfy us that this opinion is untenable; and we beg to call the attention of those who entertain it, to the reasons we are now to mention. Are not the prophecies which foretold their dispersion to be understood in their literal meaning? The event has shown, that they are to be so interpreted; and are we at liberty to adopt a different line of interpretation with regard to those which speak of their return? It is true they became exiles from the church of God, but this was not all, they became exiles too from the land of their fathers—they were actually driven out of Canaan, and as they were literally dispersed, so we are bound to believe that they shall be literally restored.

But there is another consideration, and one of greater weight, tending to the same conclusion. Unless the Jews are *literally* and *nationally* restored, it cannot be made evident to the world that they have been pardoned as a nation. From the very beginning God has acted towards them as a nation—in choosing them at the first; in delivering them from Egypt; in planting them in Palestine; in conferring blessings; in inflicting judgments—to this very day is Jehovah punishing them as a nation, and one act only is awanting to complete the series, even their national restoration. By this act alone can it be shown to the rest of the world, that the Divine anger has been turned away from them as a people. Their individual conversion and admission into the church would imply their individual forgiveness, but no-

thing more: some more public and comprehensive act must proclaim to the world the remission of their national sin. Thus in what the word of God predicts, reason can perceive a high propriety, and even an absolute necessity. The Jews have been punished as a nation, and they must be restored as a nation, in order to its being declared that they have been pardoned as a nation.

We must here enter our dissent from much of what has of late years been given to the world on this subject. A lively fancy, disdaining to submit itself to the rules established for the sound interpretation of the Scriptures, and refusing even to receive aid from sober reason, has furnished a minute description of the extraordinary and miraculous events by which the return of the Jews is to be accomplished, and the vast geological and physical changes which are to be wrought upon the country of Palestine. Viewing such productions in the light of a romance they have very few merits indeed; and viewing them as a piece of theology they have no merits at all; they are a gorgeous caricature of one of the sublimest events which prophecy discloses. We look for the return of God's ancient people in the ordinary course of events, and we anticipate no changes on the soil of Palestine save such as order and industry, under the blessing of the Most High, are fitted to produce. To recover the "dispersed of Israel" from an hundred lands, and to dispose the heart of an hundred kings to grant them permission to return, and to do all this in the ordinary course of providence, appears to us as signal an interposition of Divine power, and as illustrious a display of Divine wisdom,

as if a prophet were to be sent to every monarch on the earth, armed with a commission to smite, with hail and fire and darkness, the kingdom which should presume to bar its gates against the departure of Israel.. Nor will the leading of God be less visible in their march to Palestine, in removing obstacles out of their way, and in making a thousand events to conspire to facilitate their progress, than if, as some believe, the ancient cloud of glory were rekindled to guide them through the deserts. Their eduction from Egypt, it is true, was attended by mighty signs and wonders, but not so their deliverance from Babylon; and yet, had the method of interpretation we are controverting been adopted, with reference to the prophecies which foretold that deliverance, signs and miracles would have been confidently expected so great as to throw altogether into the shade those by which their fathers were delivered from the house of bondage. It was then as it is now; a literal blessing was promised, and in plain language, but, for an obvious purpose, symbolical terms were used to describe the manner in which it was to be brought about. Accordingly, the return from Babylon was marked by no event which could be called out of the ordinary course. When the time drew nigh a spirit of prayer was poured upon the pious captives, an over-ruling Providence disposed the heart of the king, and an edict was granted empowering the Jews to return to their own land, and rebuild Jerusalem, and under the guidance of Ezra they journeyed from Chaldea to Palestine.

We proceed, in the second place, to consider, in connection with this question, the capabilities of the

country. These, in ancient times, were rivalled by few countries, perhaps not surpassed by any. The soil and climate of Palestine, at once so excellent and so varied, formed, as we have already shown, an epitome of those of all regions, and hence the exuberance and variety of her productions, and the vast population which she sustained. But at this day her capabilities in this respect are scarcely in any degree impaired. The fact is fitted to excite surprise, nevertheless it is true. All travellers attest that the same fertility of soil, and the same amenity of climate which gave such beauty and richness to the ancient Judea, are still to be found in the modern. Of this we have furnished ample proofs in the preceding pages and we would only fatigue our reader by dwelling longer on this subject. There is no question that the long desolation of the country, acting in the manner we have already described, has deteriorated somewhat both its soil and climate, but not to a greater degree than the industry of a few years would be able to repair. The plains are covered with a fine mould, which pours forth grass, herbs, and weeds in such luxuriance that sometimes they overtop the traveller. How very little labour would be necessary to cover these plains with crops of the richest grain, or plantations of olives—the most valuable anciently of all the trees of Palestine! How soon might an industrious and active population restore the terraces of the mountains, cover them with mould, and plant them with the vine and fig-tree; so that before many years had passed, the spectator as he looked from the top of Carmel or Tabor, might have reason to to say, "This land that was desolate is become like

the garden of Eden." We have already said that we look for no changes on the soil of Palestine save such as are the result of natural causes, accompanied by the blessing of the Most High. And these are sufficient. A wise government and an industrious people are all that are needed to render Judea what she once was—the glory of all lands. To employ the figure under which the prophet has described her desolate state, she resembles the oak whose leaf has withered and is fallen, whose boughs the winter has rifled, and whose trunk appears to be dead; but let the spring open upon it, and the green bud and the flourishing bough will show that life never departed from the root.

It is fitted, surely, to strengthen our confidence in the prophecies which respect the future restoration of the country and people of the Jews, that at this day we behold no insuperable obstacle in the way of their accomplishment—scarcely indeed any obstacles of any kind. It is truly astonishing that it should be so after the changes and revolutions of eighteen hundred years. The curse has checked but not extinguished its fertility, its people have been scattered but not annihilated, and the former has only to be revived, and the latter gathered together, in order that the prophecy may be fulfilled. How different is it with some countries in the neighbourhood of Judea, whose soil has been utterly wasted, and whose people are extinct. Nor, as regards those who at present live in Palestine, is there any difficulty to the fulfilment of the promise. It was said before the dispersion that the land should lie "empty" so long as the Jews should be in "their enemies' land."

Different nations have taken possession of Palestine, but of none of them can it be truly said that they have been able to inhabit it; the country, unwilling to yield its riches to strangers, has locked them within its own bosom. At this day a miserable and degraded population is thinly sprinkled over the soil, —the unworthy possessors of a country so rich in the gifts of nature. Hunger and the bastinado alone can compel them to work; and they are daily wasting away under the malign influences of oppression, plague, and crime. Should it become necessary that these wretched beings should leave the country; it may be asked how they are to be provided for? There are richer and more extensive lands beyond the Jordan than would maintain ten times their number. There they would be equally comfortable, they could not at least be more miserable.

Other indications point to the same conclusion. The undying attachment which the Jews have cherished to this land, while it authorises the belief of their literal and national return, will, when the time comes, greatly facilitate that event. After long centuries of exile, they are as eager to return as on the day when they were driven out. Never does the Israelite offer his morning or evening prayer but it is with his face turned to that land which contains the mount where his fathers worshipped, the ruins where they dwelt, and the sepulchres where they now sleep. Gain may lure him, oppression may drive him to distant and inhospitable climes, but it is in the soil of Judea that he hopes at last to rest. Nor is it in a distant age that the Israelite expects that these things shall be fulfilled. He looks for them daily. There is

not perhaps a Jew alive at this day, with the exception of those of his race who have renounced the authority of Revelation, who does not hope to live to see "the captivity of Jacob turned back." This attachment to their ancient country, so long and so intensely cherished, is a fact which has no parallel in the history of any other people, and seems to point to some great design of Providence yet to be fulfilled.

We proceed in the third place to speak of the changes in this part of the world which are portended by passing events, and the course which a due regard at once to their duty and their interest should prompt the nations of Europe to adopt in reference to Syria, and the East in general. Before entering on this subject, it will be necessary to devote a little time to the consideration of the state and prospects of the Turkish Empire.

It may be deemed presumptuous in us to give any opinion, even the most humble, on a subject which engages, at this moment, the attention of all the cabinets of Europe. But we propose to view the question, not simply in its political bearings, we shall try it mainly on moral and Christian grounds. This is one of the most important questions of the day, as regards the progress of civilization, liberty, and Christianity; and therefore it is one of those questions on which it is not only the *right* but the *duty* of every man to form an opinion, and declare it. Besides, it is not from the mere politician that we look for the proper settlement of this great question. Beyond his own domain, it often happens that the statesman has neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear. In his view the prescriptive rights of a single man are some-

times of more force than the moral rights of millions. His plans consequently are always secular—not unfrequently narrow. We expect more from the sound feeling and enlightened judgment of a Christian nation, who, while legislators are labouring to bind together the crumbliug mass, shall soon ask, we trust, of what use is the Turkish empire?

The Ottoman Turks make their first appearance on the page of history as a roving tribe of freebooters on the southern banks of the Oxus. The avaricious policy of the rulers of Constantinople opened to them the passes of mount Olympus, and, under their leader, Othman, they descended into the plains of Bithynia. Their first inroad into the territory of Nicomedia took place in 1299, and, in less than forty years thereafter, they extended their conquests to the shores of the Bosphorus, and subdued all the Asiatic provinces, consummating the ruin of the seven churches of Asia. In 1341 the Turks passed into Europe, and steadily extended their dominion in that part of the world, until all that remained of the vast empire of the Cesars was simply the space which was enclosed by the walls of Constantinople. The capture of that city in 1453, under Mahomet the second, completed the triumphs of the Ottoman arms.

The early sovereigns of Turkey were persuaded that an empire of the sword could be maintained only by soldiers selected from a more hardy race than the effeminate natives of Asia. The captives taken in war from the European provinces sufficed at first to recruit the army. Afterwards a tax of every fifth child—and generally the most robust was taken—

was imposed upon the Christian families of Albania, Bulgaria, and the neighbouring provinces. These children were reared at the expence of the State, educated in the Mohammedan religion, and, according to the genius they displayed, drafted into the regiments, or sent to fill high civil or ecclesiastical offices; all the chief posts in the army, the law, and the priesthood, being open to them, though closed against the Turks themselves. Thus the Sultan was served by a race of slaves, who found themselves in the most honourable offices, without parents, kindred, friends, or heirs, and were thus entirely devoted to the service of the man to whom alone they owed their advancement. This accounts for much of the vigour which marked the early administration of the Turkish state, and the terrible bravery which its armies displayed on the field of battle. When at its height, the Ottoman empire included the best provinces of Europe, Asia, and Africa, and is thought to have contained upwards of forty millions of people. Its decline may be dated from the moment that the excitement produced by the wars of conquest, in which the Turks were long engaged, was at an end, which took place about 1673. The check which the Moslem arms received at that time from John Sobieski before the walls of Vienna has never been retrieved. After this, repeated defeats dispirited the troops; the relaxation of discipline, and a spirit of insubordination, tended still further to incapacitate them for service; the oppression of the provinces diminished the revenue; and as the Koran was accounted the sum of all wisdom, human and divine, science and art were neglected, and while other

nations were rising in civilisation and knowledge, and consequently in power, Turkey in this respect was declining, and hence the series of disasters by which the Ottoman power has been almost totally annihilated.

The physical, political, and moral prostration of this once mighty empire shows how rapidly the "waters of the Euphrates" have been dried up; and that, though the channel in which they ran still remains, the waters themselves—Islamism and the power to maintain and extend it—have almost totally disappeared. In her palmy days her sovereigns were wont to style themselves, "The shadow of God—sole monarch of the world—king of kings:" and to speak of their capital as "a port of refuge for the world." Even so late as the beginning of last century the Turks were still the terror of Europe; but so rapidly has their power declined that they now need the refuge which they then so ostentatiously proffered. All departments of the government are in a state of utter exhaustion. There is no power in the head to move the limbs. The territorial limits of Turkey are still very extensive—the form of her government is still retained—the body is there, but the vigour, the *life* is gone. To recur again to the figure of the prophet, the channel remains, but the waters which once filled it have nearly disappeared under the influence of a scorching drought.

The reforms which Mahmoud, the late Sultan, introduced for the purpose of strengthening his kingdom have proved a source of weakness. Enamoured of every thing European, he introduced into Turkey the Frank dress. This was in the highest

degree injudicious. To clothe an oriental in the garb of Europe, is not to impart to him the energy and decision of a European, but the sure way of breaking what little spirit may remain. Besides, by these changes, and especially by the abolition of the turban, Mahmoud earned for himself and his ministers the reputation of infidels, and loosened the religious prejudices of his subjects; this was a serious error in Turkey. In an empire of religion, as Turkey strictly is, the religious or superstitious prejudices of the people are the *main* source of the nation's energy. In proportion as you check the one, you destroy the other. In the war-cry of the Mussulman, the "Koran" and the "Sword" were joined—and well they might; for it was the former which whetted the resistless edge of the latter. Mahmoud did not see that by impairing the reverence entertained for the Koran, he was taking effectual means to weaken the energy which impelled the sword of the Mussulman.

The late Sultan introduced, but with the like success, several important changes into the army. The Janisaries, so long the defence and pride of the Ottoman empire, had latterly become the terror of the throne, and the scourge of the people. These, in 1826, Mahmoud caused to be massacred. The troops which have replaced them are far inferior even to the dissolute and disorderly Janisaries. They are raw, sickly-looking, and ill-fed youths, without proper officers, without discipline or courage, or any one quality of the soldier; their attenuated forms set off to small advantage in the Frank dress, living on black bread, and scarcely able to wield their muskets. The present Ottoman troops may perform a

few evolutions on a review day, and even these they execute badly, but they are of no use whatever on the field of battle.

The Ottoman fleet is in the same crippled condition. When it anchored the other day at its usual station in the Bosphorus a little above the Golden Horn, on its return from Alexandria, it amounted only to eight ships of the line; with a few frigates and vessels of smaller tonage. But it is not so much in the *numbers* as in the *state* of the Turkish navy that we discern its weakness. The Turks are unable to build their own ships. Americans have latterly performed this office for them; and more recently the British. Nor are they able to navigate them beyond a cruise on the sea of Marmora. There is not, perhaps, in their whole navy a single individual able to take a solar observation. Their vessels are manned with uninstructed hordes of landsmen, unable to point their guns, and likely in an action to be more dangerous to one another than to the enemy. Their powder they must import; what is of native manufacture is of no use but to fire salutes. "Tchorbans" (shepherds), said the Capitan Bey to Slade, when the Turkish fleet was advancing up the Bosphorus in 1829, professedly in search of the fleet of Russia, but afraid to look at the offing in the Black sea, lest a Russian sail should be discovered, "Tchorbans are now our sailors, who smell the sea and gunpowder for the first time." [1]

The institutions established by Mahmoud for imparting to his people a knowledge of the languages, the arts, and the sciences of Europe, have proved abortions. Painfully aware of the inferiority of his

[1] Slade's Travels in Turkey, vol. i, p. 165.

subjects to the natives of other countries, and that most of his misfortunes were to be traced to this cause, the late Sultan laboured to arrest the decline of his empire by establishing civil and military schools; but his efforts in this respect were marked by the same fatuity which has characterised all attempts at reform in Turkey. In these schools the different branches were taught by qualified masters from Europe; but unfortunately at the head of each establishment was placed an ignorant and arrogant Turk, with the complete control over the appointments, and, in short, over the whole business of the school. Such a person could act only as an incubus. His perpetual and stupid interference with the masters soon led to their leaving in disgust, and completely undermined the efficiency of the institution. Such has been the fate of the military school at Pera, in which it was proposed to teach the elements of those sciences which are necessary for an officer. The naval academy of Halki, one of the prince's islands in the sea of Marmora, has been even less productive of good. Its presiding officer is an old and ignorant Turk: its only professor is an old Jew, who teaches astronomy and navigation, and denies the doctrine of the earth's rotundity. It must be admitted that the independence and freedom of thought which have so completely emancipated this person from all scientific prejudices, may yet lead to important results should he gain an ascendency, as is not improbable, over the mind of the weak prince who now occupies the Ottoman throne; one of these results is likely to be the dismissal of every scientific and military individual belonging to Britain

now employed in Turkey. The school established by the Greek merchants in the island of Halki, although liberally supported with money, and provided with a numerous staff of masters, has been closed. Similar attempts have been repeatedly made both by the Greeks and Armenians, but with similar success. After languishing for a short time, these establishments have, one after the other, been given up. The uniform adverse fortune of the schools established during the past ten years in Turkey has been owing in part to the jealousy of the Armenian and Greek priests, who are afraid of the light breaking in upon their followers; and in part to the intrigue and gold of Russia, whose interest it plainly is to keep the Ottoman empire in a state of as great weakness as possible, but mainly to the unconquerable indolence and the still more unconquerable pride of the Mussulman. He possesses the Koran, and that to him is instead of all knowledge and all art. 'It were foul shame in a "true believer" to submit to learn of an "infidel and a dog," for such he accounts the Christian. Thus it is that, after a few ineffectual attempts to enlighten the night of Turkey, these institutions have ceased to exist, or if the first two be still open, they might, so far as regards the communication of knowledge, as well be closed.

The numerous establishments of art opened in Constantinople since 1830 are in the same languishing state. The government workshops and arsenals were filled with Scotch and English artisans. These, after being thwarted by their stupid Turkish overseers, who sat and smoked their pipes, and issued their orders touching matters of art, of all knowledge

of which they were perfectly innocent, are now in course of leaving the country. The numerous pieces of machinery taken out to Constantinople from Britain are lying unused, and, like Turkey herself, are hastening to decay.

We may be reminded of the Hatti Scheriff proclaimed with so much pomp on the accession of the present sovereign. But it is plain that this constitution was framed for the purpose of being *proclaimed*, not *administered*. Its history is as follows. Redschid Pacha, in the character of ambassador extraordinary, spent some time lately in London and Paris. While in this country he was schooled in the new opinions. A constitution was drawn up in Paris, which spoke of the *Turks* administering equal justice to all. This document Redschid Pacha carried with him to Turkey, and on his arrival there prevailed on his master—a child, and one more infantile in knowledge than in years—to assemble his Mussulman, Jewish, Greek, and Armenian subjects, and read it to them. But those know little of the Turkish character, or of the state of matters in the Ottoman empire, who expect that it is to go farther. No measure has been taken to give it effect; and even granting that this may yet be done, to whom must such a measure be entrusted? To those who are notoriously the most corrupt and unprincipled judges on the face of the earth—the men who live by the SALE of justice. The patron of the Hatti Scheriff, Redschid, is now requesting permission to retire from office, and in all probability the new constitution shall perish with him.[1] Moreover, it is not reasonable

[1] Since the above was written, Redschid Pacha has been dismissed; so there is an end of the New Constitution.

to suppose that the man in whose weak hands all practical reforms—the schools and the workshops—have stood still, is to possess the decision and skill necessary for working out so theoretical a piece of reform as a new constitution.

What renders the case of Turkey altogether hopeless is the utter mental and moral prostration of her people. The modern Turks are, without exception, the most degraded race on the face of the earth. We would not insult the Hottentot by comparing him with the Turk. The character of the Moslem people, as well as the genius of their government, is entirely moulded by the Koran. The influence of this book is more pernicious and debasing than was the ancient polytheism of Greece and Rome, or than any of the superstitions by which the modern heathen world is disgraced; many personal and social crimes it exalts to the rank of virtues. As the consequence of its teaching, the Turk combines the ferocity of the savage with the sensuality of the brute. Few of the Moslems have escaped the deep degradation of a vice which cannot even be named in a Christian country; their indulgence herein has destroyed the sensibilities of their nature, and completely prostrated all their energy of character. In the Mussulman opposite vices are strangely blended. His lukewarmness in behalf of his own creed is joined to a fierce intolerance of that of others. His pride is combined with apathy; having no alliance whatever with that spirit which in a sort redeems it. He is perfidious, yet affects great integrity in his dealings with Englishmen, knowing that to them he cannot be dishonest without subjecting himself to the bastinado. His inferiority

to the natives of other countries he is unable to hide from himself, yet his arrogance prevents him from learning from them any one useful art. And although conscious that his country is declining, his penetration cannot discover the evils which are preying upon it; and his indolence unfits him for making a single effort for averting the ruin towards which every day and every event are accelerating it. The truth then as regards Turkey is this, that there is no rational ground for entertaining the hope of any reform or amelioration of its government—that the indolence and ignorance of its people are incurable—that its revenues are daily diminishing—and that, though Europe should preserve its territory inviolate, the combined influence of despotism and crime must soon depopulate it; and such being the case, we may safely pronounce that the Turkish Empire cannot be mended—cannot even be upheld, it must be removed.[1]

All will admit that, as regards the interests of civilization and Christianity, the dissolution of the Ottoman dominion were most desirable. Its fall would open the way for the diffusion of religion, liberty, and science over the East; it would allow Europe generally to participate in the unequalled commercial and physical advantages of this part of the globe, and it would enhance infinitely the condition, both temporal and eternal, of the miserable slaves who inhabit it. If Europe has it in her power

[1] 'Turkey and the Turks,' by John Reid. London, 1840. We are aware that the above picture of the Ottoman empire is considerably different from that commonly given in the leading journals of this country; but we venture to affirm that its truth will not be called in question by any who have lived in Turkey.

to bring about a change fraught with blessings so innumerable, it is, unquestionably, her most sacred duty to do so. That she possesses such a power no one will deny who reflects that, for the past ten years, Turkey has existed, not by her own power, but by the aid of the Western World—the disposition of the European powers to unite in a plan which would achieve so gigantic a good to the world is another question.

There is only two ways of regenerating Turkey. The first is to restore the KORAN to its former influence. This would soon revive the vigour of the government, the energy of the people, and we should again have a nation of warriors, prepared not only to uphold their own state, but to conquer others. Such a change could be brought about only by the rise of a new Impostor, who would find it a more difficult task to restore Mohammedanism, than it was to plant it at the first. Among the free tribes of Mecca, something might be done, but a Mohammedan reformer would be very coldly received by the supine and lazy race who live on the Bosphorus.

The second plan is to plant a Christian sovereign on the throne of Constantinople, and give a free and Christian constitution to its people. This may be pronounced impracticable; and yet its impracticability arises mainly, if not entirely, from the national jealousies and rivalships of Europe. With regard to the Ottoman government itself there can be no difficulty; Europe has only to speak, and it would cease to be. Nor, as regards the religious feelings of the people, would there be any such insuperable obstacle as is generally thought. In Turkey in

Europe the Christians form a majority of the people; it is doubtful whether this be not the case also in the Asiatic provinces; and those best acquainted with the Turkish character and feelings give it as their opinion, that were Christianity proclaimed as the religion of the empire there are few of the Mussulmans who would not conform. The Prophet and the Koran have come into very questionable repute amongst them, and this, united with the apathy of the Turkish character, would dispose the bulk of the nation to acquiesce in the change. Nor would there be great difficulty as regards the manner in which this change might affect European interests. The balance of power in the West would surely be as effectually maintained by having a government of average power in Turkey; and the road to the eastern possessions of England would be as securely guarded against any European power which might wish, without England's consent, to perform that journey. Would it not be wiser to come to some such arrangement as this before matters are so embroiled as to render the plan impracticable, than to labour at the chimerical attempt of bolstering up so broken an edifice? The success of the plan, no doubt, would depend greatly on the skill, the vigour, the wisdom, the prudence, and, above all, the fidelity of the hands into which it might be entrusted; but, if viewed candidly, we think its practicability will be acknowledged. The incalculable benefits which would flow from it to Turkey herself—whom it would emancipate, civilize, and save—to Europe—to whose enterprise it would open the richest field which the world contains—to the whole world, the highest interests

of which it would mightily advance, are so obvious as not to require to be pointed out.

But this course the sovereigns of Europe will NOT adopt. The decline of Turkey will be allowed to go on; and, along with that, the emancipation of the fairest portions of the globe from the double yoke of Ottoman despotism and Moslem superstition delayed. Repeated insurrections will call for the interference of the European powers. At last, the Muscovite, or some other state, will step in and seize on Constantinople, and, amid the wars and disasters consequent on such an event, Turkey shall come to her end—very probably in not many years.

But is there no prospect of rescuing from the Ottoman yoke that portion of the Turkish empire which possesses such an interest in the eyes of the Christian world—the land of Judea? We know of no obstacle to the accomplishment of this most desirable event save that to which we have already alluded—the indisposition of the European powers. What is there to prevent Syria, from the foot of Mount Taurus south to Edom, being erected into a separate and independent kingdom? We may be reminded that the resolution to maintain the integrity and independence of Turkey has been solemnly promulgated from the thrones of England and France. But this integrity has already been violated; Greece has been erected into an independent kingdom. Mehemet Ali now possesses the hereditary government of Egypt. Even Syria, the country in question, was already under the government of another than the Sultan, on the condition of a small annual tribute. The arrangement formed with Mehemet Ali, when

he threatened Constantinople in 1832, in addition to Egypt and Arabia, which he already possessed, invested him with the government of Syria, Candia, and Adana in Asia Minor, commanding the passes of the Taurus. Even after the late war was commenced, Mehemet was offered the government of Southern Syria, including the pachalic of Acre, for life; which, it is well known, he would have contrived to have rendered hereditary. And shall the powers of Europe refuse to the claims of humanity, what they were willing to grant to the demands of ambition? Besides, we should think the Porte would be very willing to get quit of Syria; it was a burden to the Pacha; and it is likely to be even less profitable under the rule of the Sultan. Moreover, it contains some insurrectionary districts. The tribes of Lebanon are not likely to submit in quiet to the Ottoman yoke; the armed interference of Europe will be necessary to retain them much longer in slavery. The inhabitants, we have said, are few—not a tithe of what the soil might maintain—and can never be taught to cultivate the ground; and why should Syria lie waste merely that the Ottoman sceptre may be swayed over it—over lands which can yield no revenue which shall defray the expence of governing them? Every consideration shows the propriety of immediately disjoining Syria from the Ottoman empire, and placing her under a free government, and an independent sovereign. This change would benefit Turkey herself; would be agreeable to the wishes of the people of Syria; is sanctioned by former precedents; and would greatly advance the interests of humanity. And were this

desirable arrangement effected, to whom could the agricultural and the maritime resources of Palestine be thrown open so well as to its ancient people, the Jews? There are difficulties connected with this arrangement arising out of the political jealousies of Europe: with these we do not meddle; they are such as the skill of the diplomatist can teach him to surmount.[1]

It is a grave question how far Europe is justifiable in upholding—for Turkey would fall were she let alone—this great system of despotism, superstition, ignorance, crime, and wretchedness which oppresses so large a portion—and that the fairest—of our globe. What interest is benefited by it? Does not the position of Christian England call on her to lend her power to the furtherance of changes which all allow to be desirable, and which, we humbly conceive, are practicable? Nations have their duties as well as individuals. The nation first in point of rank is also first in point of responsibility. And to whom does that perilous pre-eminence belong? What name so terrible as that of Britain? Where is the quarter to which her influence does not extend; and where is the tribe whose destinies she cannot, in some degree, control? She has laid one hand on the ocean, and the sea obeys her; with the other she is planting her outposts all over the world; and were she emulous of the high destiny which Providence is opening to her, these she might

[1] Able articles on the Eastern question have appeared in recent numbers of the 'London Quarterly,' and the 'Edinburgh Review,' written evidently by men intimately acquainted with the diplomacy of the question; but, in perusing them, one regrets that the higher bearings of the subject are never once looked at.

make so many centres from which divine truth, and along with that freedom and knowledge, might disseminate over the earth. On the north-west vast part of the continent of America is under her sway. In the south-west her authority is owned in most of the islands which stud the bosom of the great Atlantic. The rock of Gibraltar and the island of Malta afford her access to all the shores of the Mediterranean. In the fortress of Aden she holds the key of Arabia; while her settlement at the Cape opens to her the continent of Africa. The islands in the Indian archipelago are hers; on the banks of the Ganges she is planting her institutions; while a New Britain is rising in the midst of the great Pacific, which, with a wider territorial basis, and a finer climate, may, perhaps, at no distant day, rival the mother empire. Her flag now floats on the island of Hong Kong, which may ultimately become a light house in the dark land of China. This position of unexampled influence imposes on Britain duties of unequalled magnitude in respect to the world. But there is no quarter where she has it in her power to achieve a greater good than in Syria. To her the nations in that region of the world look. Could she only lay aside her present timid policy, and do what humanity demands, and what befits her high station, how light might she make of any opposition which might be offered to the execution of her plans, and how fearlessly might she commit herself to the protection of that Providence which has so singularly blessed and prospered her hitherto. Would that she could hear the voice which thus addresses her, "I girded thee," and "have holden" thy "right

hand" "to subdue nations" that thou mightest open "the two-leaved gates" of superstition and tyranny, and be the glorious herald of light and liberty to the benighted nations of the world.[1]

Before we leave our subject, we shall turn once more to the countries which have already engaged so much of our attention. The events of their history have furnished to the poet a theme for glorious song; in their hallowed scenery the painter has found a fit subject for his pencil; their ruins present to the Christian so many existing proofs of the truth of prophecy; but there is one lesson which they teach which has never been sufficiently attended to, and which is capable of more applications than we shall here make of it.

The malediction under which Judea and the neighbouring countries are still suffering was pronounced for sins committed by men who lived two thousand years ago. This opens an important view of the Divine government. It plainly shows that the government of God is exercised towards nations as well as towards individuals; that nations are regarded by the supreme Ruler as capable of federal vows and corporate sins; and that the obligation of the one and the guilt of the other descend beyond the persons who were actually concerned in them, and continue of force so long as the nation exists, provided the object contemplated in the vow be permanent, or the guilt of the sin not removed by national repentance. Judea, we say, has, for two thousand years, been a standing witness to the truth, that these are the principles on which God's government over the world is based. The life of an individual is limited

[1] Isaiah, xlv. 1, 5.

to seventy or eighty years; that of a nation may be prolonged for several centuries. As the individual advances from youth to age, he alters his habits, enlarges his knowledge, but these changes nowise affect his identity—he is still the same individual. The nation runs a similar career—it advances in science, in refinement, in political power; the individuals which compose it at one period die and go to their graves, and have their places supplied by others; but these changes do not affect the nation's identity, which possesses, in this respect, a sort of eternity. The years which have passed over an individual do not dissolve the obligations or cancel the guilt he may have contracted at an earlier period; and so is it with a nation, which, in this respect, is only a larger individual, and accordingly may be righteously punished in its old age for sins committed in its youth. What an awful and solemn confirmation do these truths receive from the state in which Judea and the countries around have so long existed? With regard to Judea, we are expressly told that the calamities inflicted on her land and race, and to which they still continue subject, are the punishment of the violation of the covenant into which their fathers entered with God at Horeb; and if the principles stated above be not true, we know not on what grounds we are to vindicate the righteousness of God in punishing the Jews so long, and that too for violating a covenant into which those now alive never personally entered. Nor know we what explanation to give of the fact that Ammon and Moab and Edom should remain to this day monuments of the Divine vengeance against sins which were committed many

ages ago. These countries testify to the world at this day the same truth which was proclaimed of old to Moses amongst the mountain solitudes of Sinai, "The Lord God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children." And when we think of the exhibition which has here been given of this part of the Divine character and government, and the solemn and affecting manner in which that exhibition has been made, we are constrained to say in adoring reverence of the great Ruler, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." [1]

[1] Revelations, xv, 3.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A. Page 77.

HERMON.

This mountain was named Sirion by the Sidonians, and Shenir by the Amorites.[1] The name of Hermon will recall to the memory of every reader of the Scriptures the magnificent description of the power of God in the twenty-ninth Psalm, in which David speaks of the whole range of Lebanon and Hermon, with all their cedars, being shaken by the Divine voice: "The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He maketh them also to skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn." The classical reader also will recollect the mention that Tacitus[2] makes of the thick shades, the snows, and the streams of the great range of which Hermon forms a part, and of which it is the chief summit. "Præcipuum montium Libanum erigit, mirum dictu tantos inter ardores opacum fidumque nivibus. Idem amnem Jordanem alit, funditque!"

It was sometimes called the Mons Nivis, from the fact that its summit was the seat of perpetual snow. Eusebius in his ecclesiastical history calls it Ὄρος Πανιὸν, from the circumstance that a temple dedicated to Pan stood at the bottom of the mountain near the source of the Jordan. One passage,[3] in which this mountain is alluded to, has occasioned great variety of opinion amongst commentators. "As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." When read as it is in the original this verse runs in the following terms: "As the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion," plainly intimating that the same dew that fell on Hermon watered the hills of Zion: indeed we are necessitated to understand that this is the meaning of the inspired writer, otherwise the beauty and force of the passage are lost as an illustration of the good effects of brethren dwelling together in unity.

We are obliged to adhere to this interpretation likewise in order to preserve a unity of meaning between the two figures which the Psalmist employs for the illustration of his subject. "It is like," says he, in the preceding verse, "the precious oint-

[1] Deuteronomy, iii, 9. [2] Hist. lib. v, c. 6. [3] Psalm cxxxiii, 3.

ment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments." And if the same line of illustration be maintained, we must suppose that the Psalmist meant to intimate that the dew which fell on the higher summits of Hermon descended to refresh the lower. But Hermon was situated at the northern extremity of the possessions of Israel; the hill of Zion, as is well known, stood in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem, at a distance of about a hundred miles from the former; and it has been asked, with what propriety can it be said that the dew which fell on the one mountain descended also on the other. We readily grant that there is no propriety in this; but we believe that this is not the meaning of the Psalmist. It has been attempted to solve the difficulty by saying that the Hermon indicated here is not the great Hermon in the north of Palestine, but the range of hills in the plain of Esdraelon, which in the time of Jerome began to receive this name, and is commonly known as the little Hermon of Jerome to this day, and that the term, "Mountains of Zion," is employed in a loose sense to denote the hills of the Holy Land around the little Hermon; thus making the Psalmist's meaning to be, that, when the dews fell on the little Hermon, they descended likewise upon the neighbouring hills. This is not a very satisfactory explanation of the matter; it destroys the unity of meaning which it is so desirable to maintain between this and the other figure in the psalm. The true solution, as we conceive, is so simple that we wonder why it has not ere this time been suggested. Hermon is not a single mountain, but is prolonged, as we have already seen, in a chain of lower heights. Deuteronomy, iv, 48, places it beyond question that Mount Hermon was sometimes called Zion,—"Mount Zion, which is Hermon." This name, which signifies *dry*, would scarcely be applied to the principal summit, seeing it is perpetually covered with snow; but it is highly probable that it was given to the lower heights by which it was bordered, and in which it is prolonged southwards. Now what so natural as to suppose that the dews which fell upon, or rather were formed by the snow-clad summit, descended copiously on the lower heights. We are confirmed in the belief that it is to this the Psalmist refers from the information which Elliot communicates regarding the great Hermon, that it is still famous for its dews. This gives a peculiar significancy to the figure of the Psalmist, and throws a singular charm over the whole psalm. The twin metaphors which it contains stand side by side, the one rivalling the other in appropriateness—the ointment on the head of Aaron flowing down to the skirts of his garments; the dews collected around the lofty summit of Hermon, watering the

heights at its bottom—in each we behold a beautiful emblem of the refreshing influence which descends from Christ, the great Head, to the meanest member of his body, when that member keeps "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

NOTE B. PAGE 94.

THE SCENE OF THE TRANSFIGURATION.

"And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter and James and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias, with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus." It is not surprising that, as the scene of so glorious an event, Man has selected the most beautiful among the hills of Palestine. From the days of Jerome, at least, Tabor has enjoyed the reputation of being the mountain on which Christ was transfigured, and to which an apostle, in reference to that event, gives the name of "the holy mount." The opinion of ages is not to be lightly set aside; nevertheless, it cannot give truth to what contains no inherent probability. It may be deemed presumptuous in us to say any thing to disturb the feelings with which every traveller ascends this celebrated hill. Above the glorious prospect around, in which every step of the ascent evolves new beauties, is the thought that up this very path the Son of God journeyed to meet two visitants from the world above; that here, on this flowery summit, Moses and Elias talked with Jesus about the decease he was to accomplish at Jerusalem; and while night veiled the glories around the awful cloud overshadowed them from which came the voice, "This is my beloved Son."

Tabor owes the honour which has been assigned to it not *solely* to its beauty; it has been thought that the conditions mentioned by the evangelists are better fulfilled in this mountain than in any other. Mark[1] says, ἀναφέρει αὐτους εις ὄρος ὑψηλον κατ' ἰδίαν μονους· of Tabor it may be justly said, that it is a high mountain, and, provided the κατ' ἰδίαν be viewed as characterising the *position of the mountain*, this condition too is fulfilled in Tabor. A connection may be traced between it and the great mountain ranges of Galilee; still it is completely disengaged from the neighbouring mountain heights, and rises in the form of a cone beautifully green on the north side of the plain of Esdraelon; but we think it will be admitted that κατ' ἰδίαν may be applied with at least equal probability to the position of the disciples on the mountain as "apart by themselves." This

[1] Mark, ix, 2.

leaves us at liberty to enquire into the other circumstances in the narrative, and to receive or to reject Tabor as the scene of this great event, according as the situation it occupies in the Holy Land shall agree, or otherwise, with the other particulars of the story. All the evangelists who speak of the transfiguration have connected it at the distance of six days with the disclosure Christ made to his disciples of his approaching death; this disclosure he made while he and they were on their way northwards from the lake of Gennesareth to the towns of Cesarea Philippi—the populous region at the sources of the Jordan; and the following considerations will satisfy us, we think, that the transfiguration took place on some high mountain in this neighbourhood, to which Christ led his disciples *apart by themselves*, and was transfigured before them. On the one hand, six days do not appear too many for Christ to spend ministering in the towns of Cesarea Philippi. And on the other they appear too few to have allowed all the circumstances to happen which must have taken place between the conversation regarding his death and the transfiguration, provided that event took place on Tabor. That portion of the journey which remained after the conversation was to be gone. Some time must be spent in ministering in the towns which he was now visiting, and after this a long journey was to be accomplished from Cesarea Philippi south to Tabor. It does not appear that six days could have allowed time for all these events. Moreover, when Christ descended from the mountain after the transfiguration was over, we are told that a great multitude met him, and amongst the crowd was a certain man who had brought to him his child possessed of the devil, for the purpose of being cured, a circumstance which implies that the Saviour had been some time in the neighbourhood, and that his presence there was well known. This view of the matter is confirmed, too, by the terms which the evangelists employ to describe the subsequent movements of the disciples. We are told that, after the transfiguration, "they departed thence, and passed through Galilee"—"and he came to Capernaum." The phrase, *passing through Galilee*, is admirably fitted to describe a journey from Cesarea Philippi to the lake of Gennesareth; but such a phrase would have been altogether improper if applied to the short distance between Tabor and Capernaum; and we may reckon it almost certain that such a phrase would not have been employed in reference to such a journey by a native of the country, and especially by those who on all occasions, in speaking of the journeyings of the Saviour, have used terms characterised by the highest degree of geographical accuracy and precision. In fine, provided the transfiguration took place on Tabor, Christ, after departing from Cesarea Philippi, of

which no notice is given, must have passed to the south of Capernaum, (for Tabor is situated about twenty miles south-west of that town,) and, after the transfiguration, retraced his steps and arrived at Capernaum, in which case he must have gone about forty miles out of his way, for the sole purpose of being transfigured on this mountain—a supposition not very probable.

NOTE C. PAGE 102.

THE SCENE OF THE TEMPTATION.

As the beauty of Tabor has given currency to the opinion that it was the scene of the transfiguration, so the gloomy and terrific scenery around the mountain Quarantania has led to the supposition that this was the place where Christ fasted forty days, and was afterwards tempted of the devil. The latter opinion possesses an inherent probability which does not belong to the former, inasmuch as as it is the nearest desert to the place where Christ was baptized. Milton, it is well known, places the scene of this event in mount Taurus. Joliffe supposes that one of the peaks of Lebanon was selected, and enumerates the various ancient kingdoms, part of whose territory might have been discerned from thence—Persia, Arabia, Assyria, Rome. From the top of Quarantania Christ might have been shown more extensive territories than those over which his father David reigned. It appears probable that Satan was permitted to cause a gorgeous representation of worldly pomps and shows to pass before the Saviour, and the phrase that is added, "all the glory of them;" certainly means something more than a mere territorial survey. His being carried to the top of "an exceeding high mountain" was obviously to favour the illusion.

The whole of the Holy Land is covered with "remarkable places." These are devoutly pointed out by the monks, who firmly believe the stories which relate to them. These are of the most ridiculous kind. We had designed to give a few examples, but the volume has already swelled too much. In derision of the example set by the empress Helena, of ornamenting such places with marble and fine buildings, Dr. Clarke remarks, that, had it been possible, this good lady would have drained the sea of Galilee and paved it with marble. Dr. Russell tells us that when the traveller said so, he was labouring under a fit of the spleen. We apprehend that there is better sense and loftier feeling in the lines of the old satirist than in the sentiment of the Scotch bishop,—

> Quanto præstantius esses
> Numen aquæ viridi si margine clauderet undas
> Herba, nec ingenuum violarent marmora tophum![1]

[1] Juv. Sat. III.

NOTE E. PAGE 298.

THE BEDOUIN ARABS.

"It is not without reason," says Volney, "that the inhabitants of the Desert boast of being the purest and the best preserved race of all the Arab tribes; for never have they been conquered, nor have they mixed with any other people by making conquests; for those by which the general name of Arabs have been rendered famous really belong to the tribes of the Hedjaz and the Yemen. Those who dwelt in the interior parts of the country never emigrated at the time of the revolution effected by Mahomet, or if they did take any part in it, it was confined to a few individuals, detached by motives of ambition. Every thing that ancient history has related of their customs, manners, language, and even their prejudices, is almost minutely true of them even to this day."

"This singularity is so striking that even their neighbours, the Syrians, regard them as extraordinary beings; especially those tribes which dwell in the depths of the deserts, such as those of the Anaza (Aeneze), Kaibar, Tai (Tih), and others which never approach the towns. When, in the time of Shaik Dahar, some of their horsemen came as far as Acre, they excited the same curiosity there as a visit from the savages of America would among us. Every one viewed with surprise these men, who were more diminutive, meagre, and swarthy than any of the known Bedouins. Their withered legs had no calf, and appeared to consist merely of tendons. Their bellies seemed shrunk to their backs, and their hair was frizled almost as much as that of the negroes. They, on the other hand, were no less astonished at every thing they saw; they could neither conceive how the houses and minarets could stand erect, nor how men ventured to dwell beneath them, and always on the same spot; but, above all, they were in an ecstacy at beholding the sea, nor could they comprehend what that *desert of water* could be."

"The Arabs of the frontiers, however, are not such novices; there are even several small tribes of them, who, living in the midst of the country, as in the valley of Bekaa, that of the Jordan, and in Palestine, approach nearer to the condition of the peasants; but these are despised by the others, who look upon them as bastard Arabs, and rayas, or slaves of the Turks."

With regard to their food Volney remarks, "it may be affirmed the lower class of Bedouins live in a state of habitual wretchedness and famine. It will appear almost incredible to us, but it is an undoubted fact, that the quantity of food annually consumed by the greatest part of them does not exceed six ounces

a day. Six or seven dates soaked in melted butter, a little fresh milk, or curds, serve a man a whole day; and he esteems himself happy when he can add a small quantity of coarse flour, or a little ball of rice." [1]

We have already remarked that they seldom eat animal food. A marriage, or the arrival of a stranger, are almost the only occasions on which it is made use of. This great abstemiousness arises in part from the great heat of their climate, which counteracts the activity of the stomach, but it is chiefly owing to the necessity imposed by their penurious soil. This meagre diet is the cause of the low stature of the Arabs, and hence the Sheiks, who are better fed, are taller and more corpulent. They are divided into tribes, as is well known, which form so many nations. A certain district is appropriated by each tribe, sufficiently large to serve for pasturage throughout the year; a few spots only of this territory are inhabited at any one time, but whoever encroaches upon it is accounted a violator of property. This is the great international law of the Arabs. In the absence of all regular government, life is sufficiently protected by the law, which has descended from the most ancient times, that the blood of a murdered person must be atoned for with that of him who shed it. To neglect to seek this retaliation subjects the injured party to lasting disgrace; and even should the murderer die before he has been punished, his crime must be avenged on his nearest relative. These quarrels, which sometimes engage whole tribes, descend from father to son, and cease only with the extinction of one of the families, unless satisfaction has been found in the proper way. Where the crime remains unavenged, all friendly intercourse is suspended between the tribes: "There is blood," say they, between us."

In an encampment, the tents are ranged in a circle; the herds are sometimes collected into the interior, when all the horses are picketed outside, saddled, and ready to be mounted on the first alarm. Dogs are the only guards and patroles of the encampment. The tents are always of the same construction; a general description may serve for them all. The materials of which they are formed are wrought by the women, and consist of goat's hair mixed with that of the camel. They are usually twenty-five feet long and about fourteen wide; the height of the tent in the centre is about six feet, the sides slope gradually, and are fastened to the ground with cords attached to pins. The interior of the tent consists of two divisions, which are separated from each other by a screen. One division is allotted to the women, and there the victuals are cooked; in the other, which is occupied by the men, the kids and lambs are driven for shelter during the cold nights of winter; these tents being formed of dark materials, appeared at a distance like

[1] Volney, vol. i, pp. 265—275.

so many black spots on the plain—"black like the tents of Kedar."

Hospitality is still practised by the Arabs of the desert, among whom it is reckoned the first of virtues. Burckhardt remained twenty days at Kerek, and was obliged to change his lodgings almost every day in compliance with the hospitable invitations of its inhabitants. When a stranger arrives at an Arab village, or an encampment, the people almost come to blows for the honour of entertaining him. The habits and instincts, induced by their mode of life, appear singular, and, indeed, even miraculous, to Europeans. Should an Arab meet a foot print on the sand, he is able to tell at once whether it belongs to his own or to some neighbouring tribe, and consequently whether a friend or foe has passed. From the strength or faintness of the impression he judges how many days have elapsed since it was made. From its depth, he is able to tell whether the person carried a load; and from the regularity of the intervals between the steps, whether he was fatigued; and consequently whether there be any chance of overtaking him. This wonderful faculty of tracing footsteps, which the Arab acquires by long practice, is highly useful in the discovery of clandestine transactions; it is scarcely possible for the perpetrator of any theft to escape seeing his passage is recorded on the sands in characters which every Arab can read.

In this short sketch of the Arabs it would be unpardonable to omit mentioning the camel; an animal so essential to the Bedouin, that without it we may safely say the desert would be uninhabited. "No creature," says Volney, "seems so peculiarly fitted to the climate in which it exists. Designing the camel to dwell in a country where he can find little nourishment, Nature has been sparing of her materials in the whole of his formation. She has not bestowed on him the plump fleshiness of the ox, horse, or elephant; but, limiting herself to what is strictly necessary, she has given him a small head, without ears, at the end of a long neck without flesh. She has taken from his legs and thighs every muscle not immediately requisite for motion, and, in short, has bestowed on his withered body only the vessels and tendons necessary to connect his frame together. She has furnished him with a strong jaw, that he may grind the hardest aliments; but, lest he should consume too much, she has contracted his stomach, and obliged him to chew the cud. She has lined his foot with a lump of flesh, which, sliding in the mud, and being no way adapted to climbing, fits him only for a dry, level, and sandy soil like that of Arabia; she has evidently destined him likewise to slavery, by refusing him every sort of defence against his enemies. Destitute of the horns of the bull, the hoof of the horse, the tooth of the

elephant, and the swiftness of the stag, how can the camel resist or avoid the attacks of the lion, the tiger, or even the wolf? To preserve the species, therefore, Nature has concealed him in the depth of the vast desert, where the want of vegetables can attract no game, and whence the want of game repels every voracious animal. The milk of the camel nourishes the family of the Arab under the varied forms of curds, cheese, and butter; and they often feed upon his flesh. Slippers and harness are made of his skin, and tents and clothing of his hair. Heavy burdens are transported by his means; and, when the earth denies forage to the horse, so valuable to the Bedouin, the she-camel supplies that deficiency by her milk, at no other cost for so many advantages than a few stalks of brambles or wormwood, and pounded date kernels." [1]

NOTE F. Page 451.

IDUMEAN SCIENCE.

The following induction of particulars, made by the translator of Laborde, from the book of Job, shows the great extent and variety of Idumean knowledge in the times of the patriarch.

"We learn from the calamities which that virtuous man (Job) suffered in the early period of his life, that at one time Uz, or Idumæa, his native place, was subject to the incursions of the Sabeans and Chaldeans; but, from a variety of circumstances, we may infer that, with such occasional exceptions, the country in general enjoyed tranquillity, and a high state of prosperity. The year and the month were regularly defined. Kings, and other great men, had been accustomed to build for themselves splendid tombs. They possessed great wealth in gold and silver. Traditions even then prevailed concerning treasures *anciently* concealed in the earth. The vicissitudes of famine brought on by war, which prevented the people from attending to their usual agricultural pursuits, were not unfamiliar to the age. They were acquainted with the use of scales and the weaver's shuttle; they made cheese from milk; their gardens were protected by ground traps and snares, they were accustomed to cut inscriptions on tablets, which were fixed with lead in the faces of rocks; they had steel bows for their archers; their arrows were kept in quivers; and they bare in battle the spear and the shield, as well as the sword. The The combat was animated by the sound of the trumpet. The war-horse of Idumæa in those days is finely described as having 'his neck clothed with thunder.'

"That they had already turned their attention to astronomy

[1] Volney, vol. i, pp. 271, 279; MacMichael, pp. 220, 221; Robinson, pp. 176, 177.

appears from their being acquainted with the names of several of the constellations, such as Arcturus, Orion, the Pleiades, and the Crooked Serpent. The regions of the sky below their latitude they mystically described as 'the chambers of the south.' In natural history they were acquainted with the habits of the lion, the eagle, the hawk, the peacock, the ostrich, the grasshopper, the spider, the elephant (behemoth), the whale (leviathan), and other animals. They were conversant with the arts of mining, by which they extracted from the earth, gold, silver, and iron. They also manufactured brass, and set a value on the topaz of Ethiopia, coral, pearl, and rubies, crystal, the onyx, sapphires, and other precious stones as well as the gold of Ophir. They manufactured oil and wine. The soil was deemed of sufficient value to be divided by landmarks. They were acquainted with the extremes of wealth and poverty; and amused themselves with dancing to the sound of the timbrel, harp, and organ. They had regular tribunals for the trial and punishment of offences. They were acquainted with the use of money. They had even advanced so far in the ways of luxury as to have ointments, to wear gold earrings, and to possess looking-glasses formed of polished metal. They had a clear idea of a future world of happiness and of punishment; and amongst no people do we find so sublime descriptions of the works and majesty of the Omnipotent." [1]

THE DEAD SEA.

(See page 243.)

After a full consideration of the subject to which this note refers, the author came to the conclusion that all previous theories regarding the Dead sea were untenable. A comparison of recently discovered facts, with the geographical arrangement and structure of the lake, led him to form the theory which he has given in the end of Chapter Eighth—that the sea terminated at what is now the ford; that between its extremity and the head of the valley of Araba was a plain, well watered and fertile, of nearly twenty miles in length—the valley of Siddim; that Sodom and Gomorrah stood near the head of this plain, and that the ground on which they stood being depressed by their overthrow, the waters of the adjoining lake poured in and covered their site. When the author's opinions on this subject were written and sent to the press—which was in the Autumn of last year—he was entirely ignorant of what he has since discovered, that the very same theory, supported by the same facts and reasonings, had occurred a few months before to the Rev. E. Smith, the companion of

[1] Laborde, pp. 8—11.

Professor Robinson, and had been published in the January Number (1840) of the American Biblical Repository. The theory, as given by Dr. Robinson, includes the probable agency by which the Almighty was pleased to work in the terrible overthrow, but in other respects it is exactly the same as that proposed by the author in the Eighth Chapter of this volume. The author is aware that he cannot claim the merit of being the original inventor of this theory, although, when he formed it, and for some time after it was printed, he fully believed that it had never occurred to any one save himself. According to the rule established in such cases, the merit of the discovery belongs to the gentlemen named above, to whom he willingly surrenders it, and whom, he begs to assure, should their eye ever meet this page, that he has felt the highest satisfaction in having his views on this subject confirmed in so singular a manner by their high authority.

Of the manner in which Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, we have not spoken. This is a fruitful theme for conjecture. The account of this terrible event given by Moses is brief and sublime. "The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." [1] Much has been written in elucidation of these words, but no better commentary has yet been offered on them than that given by Josephus, that the catastrophe was occasioned by lightning. In corroboration of this opinion, Professor Tennant remarks in his manuscript lectures that fire and brimstone are frequently used by the inspired writers to denote a thunder storm. Lightning might ignite the bituminous soil of the plain—and that such was the nature of the soil appears from the history in Genesis; and, if once ignited, the whole valley would speedily be converted into one vast blazing furnace, in which cities, men, and the ground itself, would perish. The burning would go on till the bituminous strata were destroyed, and thus a basin would be formed for the lower lake. This manner of destruction would cause the valley to present the appearance which it did to Abraham, when he viewed it in the morning from the heights of Hebron: "He looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and behold, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." [2] A thick heavy smoke must have arisen from a burning bituminous mass of about ten miles by six. Had the ground been suddenly submerged, as some believe, the smoke would have been cut off. This also explains the means which the Almighty was pleased to employ to limit the destruction to the upper part of the plain where the cities stood, that there the walls of bitumen chiefly abounded, which

[1] Genesis, xix, 24. [2] Genesis, xix, 28.

had mainly contributed to the formation of the bituminous soil. There they are found still.

The ancients do not appear to have thought of submersion at all in the case, and speak of the country of Sodom as still existing. Speaking of the Dead sea, Josephus[1] says, "The country of Sodom borders upon it. It was of old a most happy land, both for the fruits it bore and the riches of its cities, although it be now all burnt up. It is related how, for the impiety of its inhabitants, it was burnt by lightning; in consequence of which there are still the remainders of that divine fire; and the traces (or shadows) of the five cities are still to be seen." Tacitus, who may be supposed to have followed Josephus in this matter, speaks also of the ruins of the cities as still existing.[2] "Haud procul inde campi, quos ferunt olim uberes, magnisque urbibus habitatos, fulminum jactu arsisse; et manere vestigia, terramque specie torridam, vim frugiferum perdidisse." Strabo, however, speaks of a partial submersion of the plain, which we have no doubt took place. After pointing out the traces of the destruction which are still discernible on the region, such as rocks blasted by fire, the ground covered with cinders, streams of pitch, and dwellings overthrown, he mentions a report prevalent amongst the natives, that thirteen cities were destroyed, some by immersion, others simply by burning, that the latter were deserted by their inhabitants, (alluding, no doubt, to the flight of Lot,) and that the capital of these cities was Sodom, whose ruins were still to be seen, exhibiting a circumference of sixty stadia. "Ωστε πιστεύειν," says he, referring to the marks of destruction, "τοῖς ῥηυλλουμένοις ὑπο τῶν ἐγχωρίων ὡς ἄρα ὠκοῦντό ποτε τρις καὶδεκα πόλεις ἐνταῦθα, ὧν τῆς μητροπόλεως Σοδόμων σώζοιτο κύκλος ἑξήκοντά που σταδίων· Ὑπο σεισμῶν καὶ ἀναφυσημάτων πυρὸς καὶ θερμῶν ὑδάτων ασφαλτωδῶν τε καὶ θειωδῶν ἡ λίμνη πρόσοισι, καὶ πίτραι πυρίληπτοι γενοιτο· αἵτε πόλεις αἱ μὲν κατασθεῖεν, ἃς δ' ἐκλείποιεν οἱ δυνάμενοι φυγεῖν.[3] It does not appear that any of the authorities we have cited had themselves seen these ruins, the natives, whose reports they received, might believe the remains of settlements which had been formed in the valley, since the time of the destruction, to be the ruins of Sodom. We have no doubt that the site of the cities was covered with the waters of the neighbouring lake soon after their destruction, and permanently added to the Dead sea.

[1] Wars, book iv, c. 8. [2] Tac. Hist. lib. v, c. 7.
[3] Tom. ii, pp. 1087, 1088.

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